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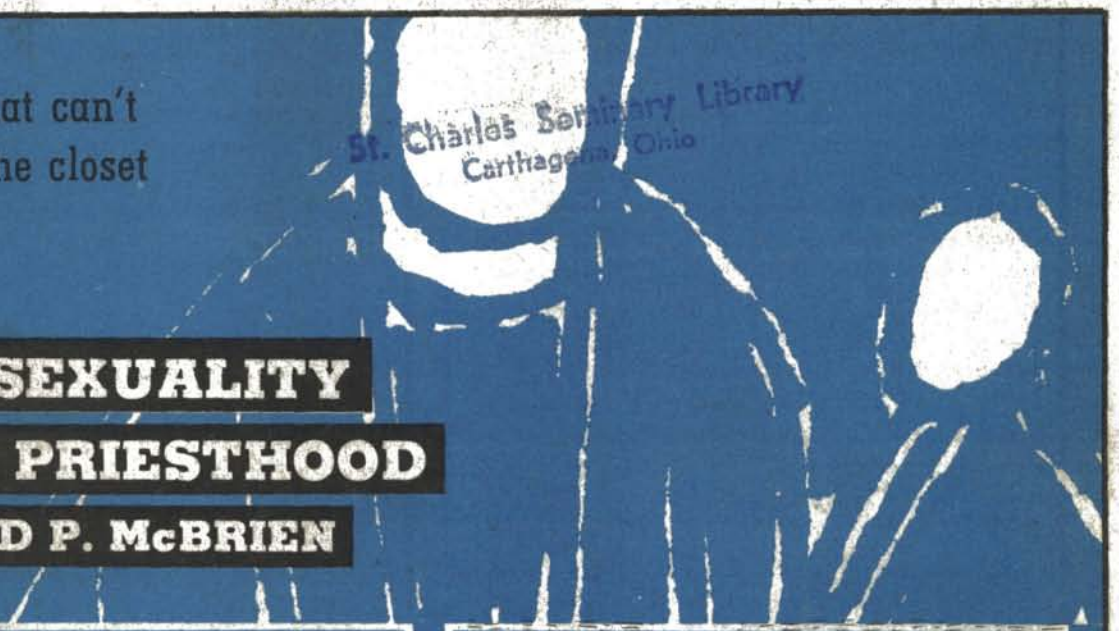
COMMONWEAL

Questions that can't be kept in the closet



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HOMOSEXUALITY & THE PRIESTHOOD

RICHARD P. McBRIEN

WITNESS & REPRESSION

CHILE
Virginia M. Bouvier

EL SALVADOR
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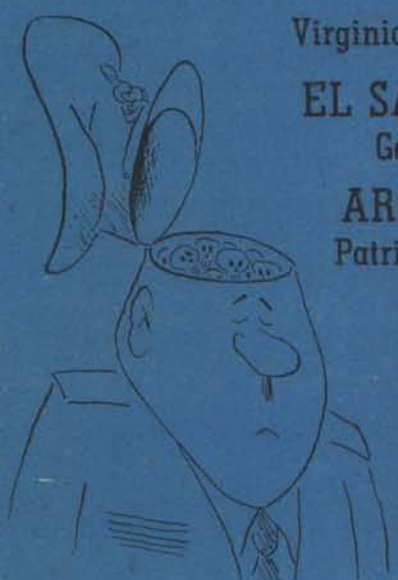
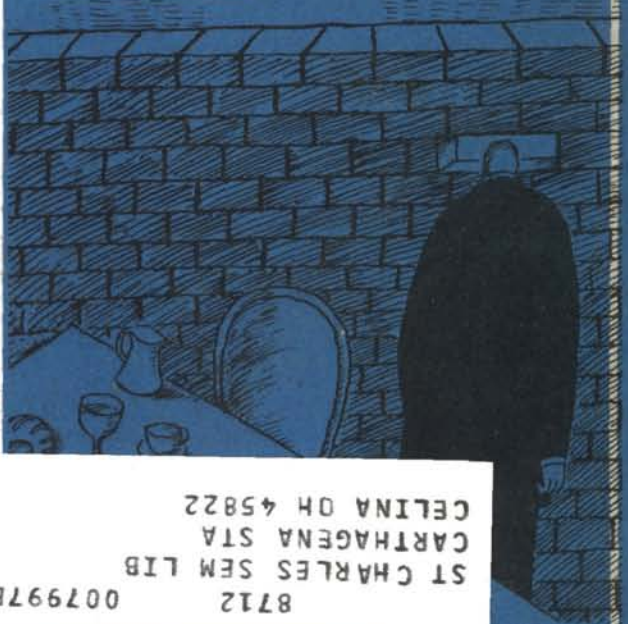
ARGENTINA
Patrick Lacefield



THE POOR BREAK THROUGH

Jo McGOWAN



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CORRESPONDENCE

Name that scandal

Milwaukee, Wis.

To the Editors: Perhaps the most damaging result of the Reagan administration's overtures to Iran has been the strain it has put on pundits trying to come up with a name for it. I note two attempts in the February 27 *Commonweal*. An editorial refers to "the Iran-*contra*spiracy" and farther along a book reviewer calls it "the Iragua scandal." Meanwhile, the *New Republic* labels it "Iranamok," *Time* talks about "Iranscam," while *Newsweek* prosaically reports on "the arms scandal." In earlier stages "Irangate" was tried, but apparently found to be too rusty. It's quite obvious that the Key Cake Caper has left American journalism groping for words.

BUD JOHNSON

Sex-ed messages

Beaumont, Tex.

To the Editors: I wish to congratulate Karen Sue Smith on a well written and informative article, "Sex Education: a Matter of Body & Soul" [April 10]. I only have one section with which I would like to take issue.

Smith states that, since some teens will become sexually active, that they must be taught about contraception and other related issues, and that "such a recognition and response does not, in itself, constitute a philosophy that sexual activity is acceptable." I suggest, rather, that teens are getting a double message. They are being told, more or less, that premature sexual activity is unwise, perhaps unhealthy, and certainly inadvisable. Then they are being told in other ways how they can "lessen their risk." I believe they hear two contradictory messages. They hear an apparent attempt to deter them from being sexually active, then they hear adults giving them preventative information (from which they hear that we must be expecting them to become sexually active). In our current anti-drug campaign, we do not hear advice to young people on how to "lessen the risk" of serious drug problems. They are simply and quite forcefully told to "Just say no!" I think we have to examine our ambivalence as a culture and as a church about why we do not challenge them similarly when it comes to sexuality.

I am fully aware that we will never eradicate teen pregnancies. In fact, I find it somewhat providential that adoption would not be possible if it were not for such pregnancies. However, there is a difference between looking the other way or promoting license and an ongoing attempt to develop character, self-restraint, and self-esteem among our young people. I evaluate such curriculums, not on their absolute efficaciousness in preventing pregnancy, but on what they can do developmentally to promote mature and responsible young people. Acquiescing to the cliché that "they're going to do it anyway" is to soft-sell the reality of human sexuality, and in effect, to let our young people down by not holding before them admittedly difficult yet noble ideals. . . .

CHARLES BALSAM
Director, Family Life Ministry
Diocese of Beaumont

Clinics in schools

Arlington Heights, Ill.

To the Editors: Implicit in the arguments favoring birth control clinics in schools are two misguided assumptions: (1) that teen pregnancies result from "ignorance"; (2) that it is the legitimate function of the schools to dispense contraceptives.

Regarding the first assumption, a recent study by Dr. Luella Klein of the American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists discovered that teen sex and pregnancies are less the result of "ignorance" than of loneliness, a lack of self-esteem, peer and societal pressures, and a lack of good character. For the most part, teenage girls become pregnant because they want someone to love; and someone to love them in return.

Concerning the second assumption, it is the legitimate responsibility of parents and physicians — and not the schools — to provide children with birth control information and pills. Consequently, when schools supply children with contraceptives, they transcend their legitimate function, undermine parental rights, responsibilities, and authority, and simply address the symptoms rather than the root cause of the problem, which is our popular sexual attitudes and practices.

For too many, sex is not a celebration of life and love — as it should be — but simply a tool of masturbatory and voyeuristic gratification. Instead of encouraging premarital sex by permitting schools to dispense contraceptives, families, churches, schools, and social organizations must courageously affirm — in word and deed — the sacredness of sex, marriage, family, and human life.

HAVEN BRADFORD GOW

Curriculum woes

Stanford, Calif.

To the Editors: According to Karen Sue Smith, the sex-education curriculum currently under attack by religious leaders in

(Continued on page 394)

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COMMONWEAL

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Selective conservatism

Is it possible to take America's political conservatives seriously? Year in and year out they warn that freedom and democracy are threatened by expanding state power. Conservatives, they evidently like to think, stand up for principle. Whether out of thoughtfulness or sheer attachment to old ways, conservatives resist the shortcuts that may make for convenient policy but chip away at the barriers to unchecked use of government power.

What a joke! Certainly there are conservatives who admirably meet that description, but the Iran-*contra* spiracy has once again demonstrated what a small minority they are. Half of conservatism's most voluble representatives are rushing headlong to justify the Reagan administration's calculated and contemptuous circumvention of congressional limits on America's proxy war in Central America. Most of the other half are looking the other way.

Senator Orrin G. Hatch (R.-Utah) and Representative Henry J. Hyde (R.-Ill.), for example, are erstwhile conservative defenders of the Constitution against the Supreme Court's "law-making" tendencies. But they have shown no such scruples when it comes to a crusading anti-Communist White House. Their questions during the congressional hearings are aimed at excusing, not probing, the administration's conduct. Congressman Hyde has played the demagogue, invoking the gulag, the Soviet invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, Cambodia, etc., etc., to suggest, emotionally if not logically, that Communist oppression creates a kind of blank check on which American officials can write out whatever foreign policy they think best, regardless of Congress's views. In questioning Robert Owen, Hyde waxed scornful about "punctilious observance" of the Boland Amendment; the TV cameras showed Owen smirking appreciatively. Hyde also raised the ghost of civil disobedience, hinting apparently that secret and illegitimate use of government power by presidential staff members is comparable to public infractions by private citizens of laws they deem unjust. A case can be made for civil disobedience by government officials, but Hyde's hinted comparison raises speciousness to new levels. Senator Hatch, on the other hand, short-circuits the whole problem by rewriting the Constitution so that foreign policy is completely the preserve of the presidency.

Both tacks have been taken by the *Wall Street Journal*, the nation's most widely read conservative organ and one that obviously prides itself on its intellectual firepower. At the moment, the *Journal*'s working theory of government seems to be rule-by-the-free-market buttressed by a CEO elected for a four-year term. During this time, the CEO is pretty much a dictator when it comes to foreign affairs (barring some assault on the free market, of course). Now, since the ultimate stakes of foreign policy these days are nothing less than global survival, almost anything can be justified in the name of national security. Which is to say that anointing the

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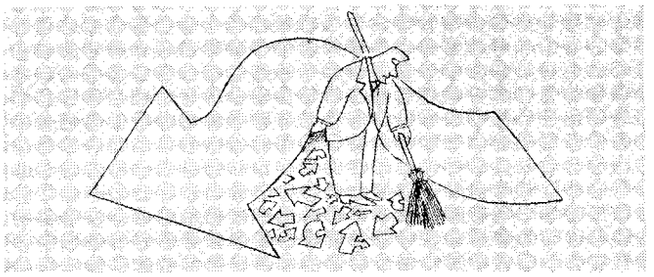

president a four-year dictator in the matter of foreign affairs is potentially to make him a four-year dictator in just about everything—a point that has been noted by even less perspicacious minds than those at the *Wall Street Journal*. National security was the explanation Richard Nixon offered David Frost to justify break-ins against opponents of his Vietnam policy. "When the president does it, that means that it is not illegal," said Frost to make sure he understood. "By definition," answered Nixon crisply. Yet even setting aside the more extreme dangers of unconstrained executive power, the fact remains that no set of strictly domestic programs has expanded the reach of government more and had greater *domestic* consequences in the last half century than the burden of war and defense preparations. Wouldn't it behoove conservatives worried about "statism" to heed the checks and balances the Constitution established in regard to foreign, no less than domestic, policy?

Not at the *Journal*. There, it is enough that "the American people elected Ronald Reagan president, passing judgment on both his competence and his foreign-policy beliefs. Does 'the law,' mean that the results of this election are now overturned in favor of the foreign policy of Claiborne Pell?" Those quotation marks around "the law" reveal as much about the *Journal*'s political mentality as anything else. The day before the Tower Commission issued its report, the *Journal* sneered at "this tower of political babble"; more recently it has fingered the real culprit: Congress, guilty of "micromanaging" Nicaraguan policy. A signed piece by one editor ran under the headline "Boland Laws May Be the Real 'Crime' ". And so as to leave nothing to chance, the *Journal* wielded the ultimate argument: "Which side are you on, boy? The Sandinistas or the anti-Communists? . . . Does Congress stand with Elliott Abrams or with Dear Comandante Danny Ortega?" Take that, you Commy-loving pinko!

Perhaps it is not surprising that the *National Review* would operate at a similar level of principle. The Boland Amendment "was an obscure rider on an appropriations bill," so why is the "Pecksniff set" making all that fuss? The editors believe, with George Will, that President Reagan should just assert his constitutional right to run foreign policy unimpeded by what Will calls "pseudo-legal static in the system." The Imperial Presidency is alive and well, but now its defenders are not liberals of the big-government school but conservatives of that-government-is-best-which-governs-least-except-when-it's-fighting-Marxists school.

So much for the apologists. What about the strong, silent types, the conservatives who have so many other pressing things to worry about, like the threats to freedom emanating from affirmative action or left-wing professors or Bishop McGann's mild moment of truth at the Casey obsequies? How long shall we wait before the neoconservative promoters of democracy, as in "religion and democracy" and "democratic capitalism," pour their considerable energies into countering the administration's remarkable rejection of democratic restraints? As the kids say, don't hold your breath.

Actually, one of the better comments on the Iran-*contra*-spiracy did appear—inadvertently—in the *Wall Street Journal*. It was in the third paragraph of a commencement address by *Journal* editor Robert L. Bartley. Bartley was speaking, in predictably dismissive tones, of the new interest in business ethics, symbolized by SEC Chairman John Shad's contribution of $30 million for an ethics program at Harvard. According to Bartley, ethics isn't all that complicated: "If in your careers you find yourselves muttering code words on street corners to collect suitcases of cash, or if you find yourselves routing your trading income through secret accounts on some obscure island, you had better stop to think for a moment about the ethics of what you are doing. Ask yourselves why you're doing things you want to hide. This is as sturdy a moral compass as anything Harvard is likely to find with John Shad's $30 million." Too bad those words weren't addressed to the White House. They provide a sturdier moral—and constitutional—compass than anything to be found in the blatant rationalizations or discreet silences of the *Journal* and likeminded conservatives.

In keeping with *Commonweal*'s usual summer schedule, only one issue is published each month during July and August. The next issue published will be dated July 17.

HUNTHAUSEN RESTORED

Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen's full authority to lead the church of Seattle has been restored. A coadjutor bishop with a strong pastoral record and nine years of experience in the region has been appointed to assist Hunthausen with right of succesSsion; from all the evidence, Bishop Thomas Murphy is a welcome and appropriate appointment for Seattle. The resolution of this painful and scandalous episode was brought about by a commission of American bishops, Cardinals Bernardin and O'Connor and Archbishop John Quinn; and the commission will continue to watch over the implementation of the settlement. This is an outcome that vindicates Archbishop Hunthausen, responds to the concerns of the local church of Seattle, and respects the principles of subsidiarity and collegiality. None of this would have occurred without the exertions of tens of thousands of Catholics, priests and laity alike, who voiced the distress that was felt by millions more.

There are aspects of the Seattle settlement that remain, well,

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unsettling. Both the commission's call for changes in the Seattle's archdiocese's "psychological and ecclesiological orientation" and the 1985 document from Cardinal Ratzinger which is still to guide those changes are a good deal less than self-explanatory. Or rather, if taken literally, they beg dozens of questions that any honest pastor knows cannot be avoided. Then, too, those who rejoice in the outcome in Seattle cannot easily forget the institutional powerlessness they experienced in the process; the ad hoc resolution, so skillfully wrought by the American commission, is still far from constituting an institutional remedy to that powerlessness.

For today, however, Catholics can take heart. A cry of distress was raised and heard. The American bishops acted effectively. Rome responded. An injustice was repaired. *Deo gratias.*

SPOONS & JUST DESERTS

"When money is counted in sixpences," wrote Simone Weil, "we have boredom in its pure, unadulterated state." When, however, it is counted in the millions, we have something far more intoxicating, though presumably less pure. It can happen not only to televangelists, but to the Vatican as well.

When Archbishop Paul Marcinkus, director of the Vatican bank (officially known as the Institute of Religious Works — IOR) was asked some years ago where the IOR invested its money, he replied with what seemed a tongue of wisdom: "Where it does best." This was before the $1.3 billion collapse of Milan's Banco Ambrosiano in 1982, in which the Vatican was the largest shareholder. That bank failure was the largest in Italian history. The same year, Banco Ambrosiano chairman Roberto Calvi was found hanged under Blackfriars Bridge in London. This is Tolstoy's *The Forged Coupon* written in the international financial pages. While the Calvi death remains unresolved, the Italian government has recently accused Marcinkus and two other top IOR officials of being accessories to fraudulent bankruptcy in the Ambrosiano affair. The three are presently holed up in the Vatican, fugitives from at least Italian justice.

In 1984, following the Ambrosiano collapse, the Vatican agreed to pay $250 million to the Milan bank's creditors, admitting that it recognized a "moral responsibility in the affair." Seventy percent of the creditors eventually recovered their investment; but most of the bank's shareholders lost out. While the chair of Peter may claim to be rock solid, it appears to be far from market wise, both with its money and that of others.

In a small-scale repetition of the Ambrosiano story, the Catholic church's Vocational Bank of Bogotá, Colombia, collapsed last October in what has been called Colombia's worst church scandal of the century. Colombian government authorities are presently determining whether to charge the bank's director, Monsignor Abraham Gaitán, with illegal use of private savings. The bank's depositors were left $11 million in the red.

When fire spread from several buildings owned by Sir Thomas More in 1529 to a neighbor's barn, More instructed his wife to pay full restitution to the neighbor, even if it left his own family with "nothing more than a spoon." In Bogotá, the church has pledged it will sell major assets, including the headquarters of its bishops' conference, to meet the Vocation Bank's commitments. This is just and right.

The Vatican owes a similar recompense to those burned by the Ambrosiano affair. But it owes more to the whole church, for whose funds — and good name — it is responsible. Vatican finances have become more open and accountable under the present pope, but more needs to be done. In March, when a Vatican report to the world's dioceses and bishops' conferences was sent out requesting they increase their contributions to the Holy See to offset its accelerating operating costs (last year the Vatican debt jumped to a new high of $56 million), the report was kept top secret. Furthermore, a cloud of suspicion will linger over the Vatican unless there is a full airing of the Ambrosiano affair and a pinpointing of responsibility. It is time for Peter to make a full accounting.

The pope would be wise to do so before embarking for the U.S. this fall. Estimates are that his visit will cost $2 million a day, a fact deserving close attention. Moreover, when he visits Texas, the Dickensian tale of the $500 million Sarita East estate is sure to be heard. The East money, set aside for "the poor of Latin America" by the late Ms. East in 1961, remains locked in Texas, blocked in part by local church and Vatican maneuvers.

Perhaps at this time of Pentecost we would do well to turn our attention, and that of the church, to the second verse of the *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*: "Come, Thou Father of the poor, Thou source of all our store." Now is the time to straighten out all our accounts: from Bogotá, to Rome, to the Rio Grande.

REPORT FROM CHILE

BUSINESS AS USUAL
LIFE AFTER THE POPE'S VISIT

In his April 1-6 visit to Chile, Pope John Paul II gave thirty speeches before audiences totaling over two million Chileans, not counting those who lined the streets to glimpse him. Businesses and shops shut down as the world looked on. Shantytown dwellers, youths, workers, Indians, and campesinos gave moving testimony to the pope about what life for them is like under Chile's military regime of President General Augusto Pinochet. They briefly recovered a piece of their 150-year-old tradition of democracy, destroyed by the Pinochet coup of September 1973.

But once the pope had departed and Chile slipped from the

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world's spotlight, the Chilean government moved quickly to keep its critics in line. In April and May, dozens of dissidents received death threats. Two recently returned exiles were kidnapped. Those who spoke out publicly during the pope's visit were particularly susceptible. For example:

- Mario Mejías, a leader from the poor neighborhood of Penalolén, who spoke to the pope at the April 2 meeting of slum dwellers at La Bandera, was kidnapped from his home in the middle of the night on April 30 and beaten up by a group of individuals in civilian clothes who identified themselves as policemen.
- Luisa Riveros and her five children, who live in the shantytown of Violeta Parra, have been threatened and under surveillance since she testified at the same La Bandera meeting. The president of a pro-government neighborhood organization told her, "I am sorry because of your children, but you are really going to get it for what you said." In their testimonies, Luisa Riveros and Mario Mejías had spoken of living conditions in the slums, including alcoholism, prostitution, drugs, government repression, and the difficult access to education and health services.
- Monica Marín, her husband Eduardo Contreras, and their four children have been followed and under surveillance since she spoke before the pope and one hundred thousand youths at the National Stadium on April 2 about the difficulties facing today's Chilean young people.

Even foreign journalists covering the pope's visit were subject to attacks. Military police detained CBS correspondent Leopoldo Correa and partially destroyed his equipment. He was accused of aggression against the police and released after eight hours on reduced charges of blocking traffic. Government hindrance of four Colombian radio correspondents, covering a land occupation in which hundreds were arrested, forced the journalists to suspend their coverage and leave the country. Unidentified men in civilian clothes provoked an incident at a tourist hotel, assaulting the *New York Times* reporter for the Vatican, Roberto Suro. UPI's Santiago correspondent, Anthony Boadle, had his home broken into and documentation and a computer stolen. Finally, a German journalist was assaulted by a man in civilian clothes, then detained by military police and his home searched by "civilians."

The pope's visit to Chile, promised to the Chilean military government following the successful papal mediation of a territorial dispute with Argentina in 1978, was controversial from start to finish. Pope John Paul II met with a broad spectrum of the Chilean population, ranging from Communist party leaders to General Pinochet himself. A poll taken by the Chilean polling group DIAGNOS only a few days after the pope's departure indicated that, of the polled population, 34 percent felt that the pope's visit favored the government and opposition equally; 27 percent felt it was more favorable to the opposition; 18.2 percent felt it was more favorable to the government; and 14.3 percent felt neither the government nor the opposition was favored by the visit.

The Chilean government currently is programing a plebiscite to take place by 1989 to ratify a single military-approved candidate, most likely Pinochet himself. The Chilean bishops have been clear in calling for a return to democracy. On May 22, the Chilean Bishops' Conference urged the military government authorities to "advance decisively in the patriotic duty of opening the doors to a true democracy."

With the normal channels for participation — political parties and labor unions — largely illegal, the importance of the Catholic church as a "voice for the voiceless" has become magnified. "The church is not neutral, it is with the people," commented Renato Hevia, editor of a prestigious Jesuit monthly. "If relations between the church and government are bad, it is because the relations between the government and the people are bad."

Indeed, church-state relations in Chile are fraught with tensions. The military government has killed or expelled priests; detained thousands of lay people, priests, and nuns; censored church statements; and prohibited pastoral programs. Paramilitary organizations acting with impunity have set aflame, bombed, or defaced dozens of churches throughout the country.

In its most recent efforts to neutralize the church's authority, the government has aimed to isolate and discredit individuals and bishops who are particularly critical. A few outspoken bishops, vicars, and priests have been reined in, and some controversial figures within the church hierarchy have been replaced with Vatican-approved, theological conservatives who wish to steer the church to a more traditional, less activist role.

The government's efforts, particularly in the last year, to close down the church's human rights office, the Vicariate of Solidarity, have had far less success. During his trip, the pope affirmed Vatican support for the work of the Vicariate,

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explicitly backing the legitimacy of the church's work in defense of human rights. Since its creation by Cardinal Raul Silva Henriquez in 1976, the Vicariate of Solidarity has given legal assistance to approximately 300,000 persons, presenting nearly 8,000 writs of *habeas corpus*, and providing legal counseling in some 6,500 court cases. In the last four years, it has given medical assistance to 14,000 victims of political repression. In 1986 alone, it worked with 2,500 social organizations to provide health, education, housing, and employment services to approximately 100,000 residents of poor neighborhoods on the outskirts of Santiago.

Harassment and detention of Vicariate staff continued after the pope's departure. In early May, Roberto Garretón and Mariana Allendes, two Vicariate lawyers who authored an article on the human rights situation in Chile, were called in for questioning for "offending the Armed Forces." Their article had charged that the regime has tried to legalize repression by creating a military "judicial" system, which acts "as an obstacle to adequate investigation of acts of human rights violations committed by military personnel or those with military rank."

The intensification of intimidation, pressure, and threats in this current period is rooted in "efforts to influence, attenuate, or diminish the commitment of the Chilean church," according to Enrique Palet, secretary general of the Vicariate. "The pressures will not alter the level of commitment which the Vicariate has to the integrated defense of the dignity of the person."

If the last two months are any indication, government persecution of its opponents is not likely to be altered as a result of the pope's visit. Nor in the short term is the persecution likely to alter the church's commitment to the defense of human rights and the restoration of Chile's democratic heritage. The church in Chile will continue to be an important and invigorating actor in Chilean politics. VIRGINIA M. BOUVIER

Virginia M. Bouvier is a senior associate with the Washington Office on Latin America. She recently returned from a trip to Chile.

REPORT FROM ARGENTINA

TIME OUT OR TIME'S UP
ALFONSIN & THE MILITARY

A movie making the rounds these days in Buenos Aires speaks volumes about the continuing swirl of controversy in Argentina over the question of punishment for military officers guilty of human rights abuses during the so-called "Dirty War" of 1977-82. In this joint Swedish-Argentine work, titled *Owners of Silence*, a Swedish journalist — a kind of middle-aged Social Democratic James Bond — arrives under the cover of a businessman during the height of the Dirty War. His mission: to find a Swedish-Argentine lass "disappeared" by the military and get his hands on a document purporting to show a systematic plan by the Argentine military to dispose of thousands of Argentine citizens. He doesn't find the gal (she's already dead), does find the document, and finds himself under arrest. His captor, a suave junior officer, takes delight in torturing a prisoner before his very eyes. The journalist antes up the document and is deported back to Sweden.

Cut to 1987. The same journalist scans the photograph placards at a demonstration against the Alfonsin government's proposal to fix a time limit on prosecutions of military officers for rights abuses. He's looking for that captain's face. Cut to the captain on horseback riding through the woods, his young wife and children at his side. He's smiling. And, so the message of the film goes, he should be. He's literally getting away with murder.

President Raul Alfonsin is currently asking the Argentine Congress to adopt legislation that would free most of the military officers currently up on charges of human rights abuse. Nine thousand people were killed and thousands more detained and/or tortured during the Argentine military's web of repression directed first against urban Montonero guerrillas and, later, against all dissidents. In human rights trials to date, five of the nine former military commanders who served on ruling juntas between 1976 and 1983 have been convicted on human rights charges and are serving sentences up to life. The other four were exonerated. Last year, Alfonsin, arguing that the country should put an end to ceaseless recriminations and forge ahead united to build a greater Argentina, pushed through legislation calling for a *punto final* — a time deadline of February 22 on filing human rights charges against military officers. Despite opposition from the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who have kept up a steady drumbeat of concern and protest on behalf of their disappeared relatives, the proposal passed into law. It did not have the desired effect. Human rights groups rushed to file charges against military suspects and the number of officers charged ballooned to as many as 450. Uneasiness among the officer corps — especially among colonels, majors, captains and lieutenants — grew.

The discontent broke into the open during Holy Week. Major Ernesto Guillermo Barreiro refused to present himself before the federal court in the state of Cordoba to answer charges of human rights abuses. The garrison there declared itself in rebellion, then surrendered, and Barreiro fled into hiding. By now, however, rebellious units under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Aldo Rico, a veteran of the Malvinas War against Great Britain in 1982, had sealed off the Infantry School at Campo de Mayo. Their demands were the dismissal of Alfonsin loyalist General Rios Ereñu as army chief of staff and government recognition that junior officers had acted only under orders from superiors in the Dirty War and thus were not liable for violations.

Responding to the crisis, Alfonsin moved first to secure the support of all the political parties, unions, and business groups with the signing of a "document of democratic commitment"

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to support his government in this time of crisis. Given the conflictive nature of Argentine politics, the fact that the Peronists joined with Alfonsin's Radicals to cement a common front was nothing short of unprecedented.

On another front, Alfonsin was enjoying less success. Hoping to avoid a clash of arms with the rebels but preparing all of his options, Alfonsin and his generals put out the call to garrisons around the country to proceed to the Campo de Mayo. Sixty-two separate army units, most under pressure from their junior officers, refused to move. A typical conversation went something like this:

"Hello. Lieutenant Aleman? This is General Tito. I order you to secure your tanks and proceed to the Campo de Mayo."

"With what objective, my General?"

"What? To repress the rebellion!"

"Of whom?"

"Of the uprising at the Infantry School!"

"With all respect, General, for this I lack a telegram which specifies the objective to be fulfilled. In addition I need an official route. And I need to know if you are the officer in charge of the entire operation and will be responsible for the consequences."

"There is no time! I order you to take out your tanks!"

"With all respect, my General, in these conditions I will not commit the tanks of my regiment."

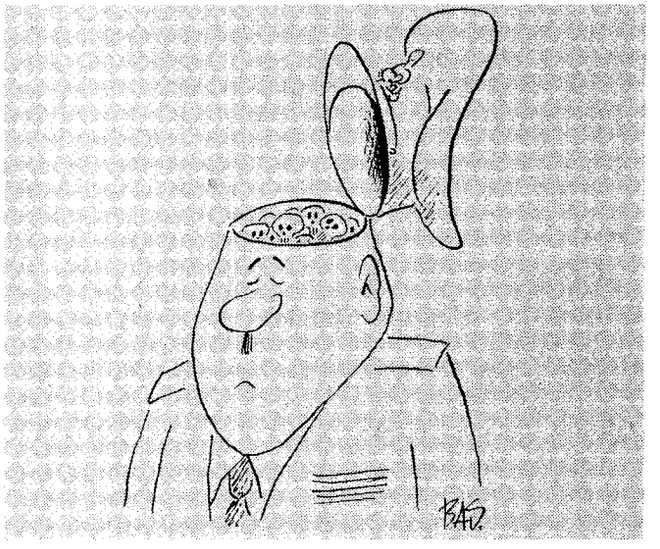
With his military options foreclosed, Alfonsin called for popular demonstrations throughout the country to support democracy. Nearly a million people gathered in the Plaza de Mayo fronting the Casa Rosada (the presidential palace) on Easter Sunday — unionists, businesspeople, families, all the political parties — right to left. Alfonsin, with opposition political leaders at his side, declared to the multitude that he would not negotiate Argentine democracy with the rebels. "I will go to the Campo de Mayo," he declared dramatically, asking the hundreds of thousands to await his return. Lieutenant Colonel Rico surrendered his command personally to Alfonsin, and the Argentine president returned to a euphoria that exceeded even Argentina's World Cup soccer victory last year. For days the crisis had been topic number one in the streets of Buenos Aires and in the plazas of the provinces. Now it was over, most thought, and their democracy hadn't been compromised.

Or had it?

Only days after Alfonsin's triumph, trouble briefly flared up again in two garrisons, despite the dismissal of General Rios Ereñu as chief of staff. Though the uprisings quickly petered out the writing was on the wall for Alfonsin. Throughout the month of May he floated proposals to define different "levels of responsibility" for rights abuses. According to government sources, the issue of trials has to be resolved so that the new army leadership can re-establish the now-tattered chain of command. Alfonsin has asked the courts to take into consideration in trials whether the officers charged complied strictly with orders, whether they gave orders, or whether they exceeded orders.

Critics to the left of Alfonsin's ruling Radical party and human rights groups, all of whom opposed the February 22, *punto final* deadline for filing charges, are vigorously opposed to the concept of "levels of responsibility." Some leftist groups have charged that Alfonsin did in fact negotiate away a piece of Argentine democracy to quiet the military rebellion. Some had urged that he put down the rebellion by force rather than negotiate, and still others at the time had called for a "People's Power" blockade of the rebellious garrison a la the pro-Aquino/anti-Marcos movement in the Philippines. This step back, some feel, makes Argentina something less than an exception to the rule in Latin America, insofar as holding officers accountable for rights abuses are concerned. In Guatemala and El Salvador, for instance, civilian governments have resigned themselves under military pressure to an unofficial amnesty. In Argentina's neighbor, Uruguay, President Mario Sanguinetti rammed through an amnesty for all military and security personnel and former Tupamaro guerrillas last year. The Uruguayan left, however, is engaged in a mammoth petition drive to bring the amnesty issue before the voters in a referendum.

Alfonsin's legislation — which has now passed both houses of the Argentine Congress, but which is sure to face court tests in the future — would exempt all officers below the rank of lieutenant colonel from prosecution, leaving only about 80 of the 450-odd accused to be judged. Alfonsin has said that he felt "uncomfortable" with the fact that some "guilty parties" would go free under the proposed law but stated that the penalty should be exacted from those who conceived the repression and used "methods of coercion" to exact obedience from junior officers. Retired Argentine Col. Horacio Ballester, a military reformer, sees it differently. "The army is like a sausage factory," he explained. "You can discard the last sausage if you don't like it, but you have to change the machinery if you want a different type of sausage." As with the *punto final*, the debate is over how to balance justice and responsibility with national unity and hard political choices. Until now, Argentina has received high marks in this department. Whether Argentina will be judged so kindly in the



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future, however, depends on the outcome of how Alfonsin, the military, and, ultimately, the Argentine people handle this continuing dilemma.

PATRICK LACEFIELD

Patrick Lacefield just returned from a trip to Argentina. He is co-author of El Salvador: Central America in the New Cold War *(Grove Press: 1987)*

REPORT FROM EL SALVADOR

THE LONG TRIP HOME

LESSONS FROM THE WAR ZONE

During the farewell Mass for Sister Andrea Nenzel, the sound kept recurring — the thumping, rumbling sound of bombs or heavy mortars falling on the slopes of the nearby Guazapa volcano.

A few months earlier, Nenzel had thought that her leave-taking — after almost two and a half years at the San Jose Calle Real Refugee camp — would mean going to live nearer to those explosions, alongside refugees who, despite the danger involved, were returning to their homes in the countryside.

But elections by her community, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, had changed all that for her. Now Nenzel was going home, back to Seattle for a five-year term as head of her order's western province.

Hours before the farewell Mass, Nenzel had made a final visit to the camp's original location, a soccer field behind a seminary. It was there that she and another Sister of St. Joseph, Margaret Jane Kling, had arrived in January of 1985 to live in the camp with the refugees.

"The identifying of my life with theirs, and the bonds that have been made, are just unreal," said Nenzel. "I've been a religious for twenty-seven years, and I've loved many groups of people I've worked with, but I don't think I've ever entered into their lives, or had them enter into my life to the extent that that's happened here."

She recalled her first, overwhelming impression when she arrived at the camp: "the tremendous, fundamental hopefulness" of the refugees.

"If you think about it rationally, there's a normal tendency to despair, to give up on life, when you've had everything taken from you. But here I found the exact opposite."

And after two years, she thought she knew why. "They know God. I've seen this here as never before. Often you meet people who are good, prayerful people and who know about God. But it's rare that you run into people who really know God as a friend, as someone in their life who is walking with them.

"And what's exceptional here is that it's a whole people who know God. They don't know a whole lot about God — if we gave them a catechetical test, they probably wouldn't pass — but they do know God. That's what comes through to me when they talk about where their hope comes from."

Nenzel remembered that hopefulness in the prayers of a refugee who came to the camp last year. The man had been forcibly removed from his home by the army during a counterinsurgency drive.

"Daniel was eighty-six years old. He was deaf from the bombardments; his eardrums had been burst. He was also suffering from severe malaria, and almost died.

"He used to pray every day. He said, 'One day my son or daughter will come, and I will be able to go back. I can't stay here. I belong to the land, and I will go back.'

"Sure enough, after one of the later captures (by the army), his daughter was brought in," and eventually he moved back to the countryside, where Nenzel visited him recently. "He looked younger than ever. He was out helping with the planting. He's the happiest man I know."

The number of refugees who, like Daniel, are intent on returning home to the countryside, has been growing recently, and for a time it appeared that Nenzel and Kling would be going along with them — a step which would have meant living in a zone where the civil war continues to be fought.

"Our decision," said Nenzel, "grew out of reflection and talking with the people. They've been asking the church to send religious personnel to minister to them and accompany them in the repopulation efforts. I kept saying we had to be willing to go with them.

"I'd be foolish to say that I didn't feel some fear, but I think that my approach to life is that you look at the things that give you life and hope, and I'm just convinced that if the people are there, that's where we need to be. I mean, where else should we be? That's what the preferential option for the poor is all about."

But when it appeared that the move to the countryside would not be possible, Nenzel consented to being nominated for the election of a new provincial for her congregation, despite her preference to stay in El Salvador.

"I felt that my entire faith journey has been responding to invitations to move on. So my feeling was that I had to remain open, and that if it was going to be, there was no way I could say 'no.'"

If she hadn't been elected provincial, "there's no doubt that Margaret and I would have moved into the war zone within the year. She hopes "there will be other sisters who'll be willing to come down and be called to that ministry."

As she prepared for the trip home, Nenzel admitted to feeling a little scared — "maybe more scared than I would have been about going to live in a war zone."

"Part of the fear about going back is wondering if some of the change I've experienced — the identification with the poor — isn't going to be trampled on. I feel as if it's a tender shoot that hasn't been nurtured enough. But I think that's where I have to trust that there will be the nurturing for it."

GENE PALUMBO

Gene Palumbo is a free-lance writer and radio journalist who reports often from El Salvador for National Public Radio.

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THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

PUBLIC SCRUTINY & THE PRESS

One of the advantages of the Gary Hart/Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker/Oliver North thing (it is all basically one thing) is that it allows everyone to spout stuff about morality, the duty of the press, righteousness, being above the law, feeling that the rules don't apply, and so forth. The press gets to go off on a self-examination binge after the Miami Vice stakeout and decides that it is, by God, doing a good job. Or maybe not: who among us is without sin? And so forth.

My major irritation with the media coverage of Gary Hart is that the Miami papers didn't cover the back door at all well. Hart's fall from — "grace" really shouldn't be the world; wherever it was he fell from reminds me of Mort Sahl's remark about the history of the presidency being a disproof of the history of evolution. We have come down to an odd Kennedy imitator, someone who wants to be president, obviously bright but also obviously weird, insisting on how stable he is and daring the press to follow him around, just *see* if he's a womanizer. His departure leaves room for better people, but some of the questions which were raised by his fall seem to me to be way off the mark. The question should not be whether a person's "private life" or "personal morality" should be subjected to public scrutiny, and the question of "character" is too vaguely put. My assumption, crude but I would bet scientifically provable, is that most people who feel a need for high office, like most people who feel an irresistible urge to entertain, are not wrapped too tight. Their characters are maybe even more fragile than the average sort. But that isn't as much to the point as having a president who can't be blackmailed.

What I mean is that if, for example, a presidential candidate were openly gay he could not be blackmailed on that account, and we are a long way from a society in which a gay president could be blackmailed with a threat to reveal the fact that he is a closet heterosexual.

But a man who claims to be as straight as the next guy — here's my wife, here are my kids — is blackmailable, if he is in fact gay. So is anyone who insists on a clean bill of moral health, while acting another way. It isn't the sin of hypocrisy which matters here, but hypocrisy's political dangers.

It is also (in the Hart case) important to know that someone who might have had his finger so close to the nuclear trigger is also so self-destructive. *Why* he may be that way is the province of the novelist, or of the psychologist. *That* he is, is the important political fact, and I suppose it may be called a question of character.

Some journalists, commenting on the Hart case, recalled what they apparently regarded with nostalgia as the good old era of the "gentleman's agreement"; the willingness to be silent about Jack Kennedy's ruttish behavior was cited, as if this were not really important. St. Jack, however, was bedding a Mafia moll. The press may not have known every power-groupie's connections, but it should have tried to find out, if it had been sufficiently aware of the need to have a president who is, not beyond reproach, but beyond blackmail.

It isn't really the job of the press to be sedate or responsible — no one ever thought the press shared its vocation with Mother Teresa — but rather to let us know damn near everything it can find out about the people who want to lead us and who should, therefore, be regarded with lots of suspicion and skepticism.

Just as the Hart story is not basically about morality, so the Jim Bakker story is not really about religion, but entertainment. Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker's *PTL Club* show is one I must confess I have watched with horrid fascination for a few years — not steadily, I hasten to say, and never for long, since only a little of it could cause insulin shock, and prolonged viewing of shows like the *PTL Club* (or game shows) causes lobotomy-by-erosion. The thin imitation of religion preached by Bakker wasn't even as solid as Jimmy Swaggart's bigoted Pentecostalism. It was more a mood in which Jesus' name was dragged around, used as a form of air-freshener or backlighting, and it somehow made some people feel good to come in contact with it.

There are some vices I will never understand: foot fetishism, for example, is one of them. Finding religious hope or consolation in something like the *PTL Club* is another. Do I begrudge these people their bad taste or naïveté? No; but I would feel better if they couldn't vote.

The fact that they can leads me to Oliver North, who would not have had his position of authority without Ronald Reagan, whose opinion-poll ratings are still not as low as they should be. Reagan manages to look so benign, even as he leaves a trail of dead Marines in Lebanon and dead peasants in Central America; and I have no doubt that he *is* benign, personally, a charming if not very focused man who would not be unpleasant to sit next to during dinner and who obviously loves his wife. (This is another drawback of making personal morality a political test.) The problem is his image. It's nice, and we want that: grandpa for president. What his ideas are, or what his close advisors believe, matters less to most people than how he makes them feel. This is no sillier than monarchy, I guess, but unlike Queen Elizabeth, whose presence on earth makes a lot of soap opera fans happy, Reagan is more than a symbol and a drain on the national treasury. He has the power to do harm.

The press is to blame for a lot of this. The Hart story is diverting, somewhat scandalous; Jim and Tammy, ditto. It's all right to be shallow at that level. What should be of concern is not that the press covers Gary Hart's alleged amours, or scandals in the world of sleazy

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evangelists, or shows us too many photos of Fawn Hall; the problem is that it seldom covers anything much more substantial, in any helpful depth. Most political coverage is commentary on image and appearance, with a nod to how well or badly a politician is playing in the polls.

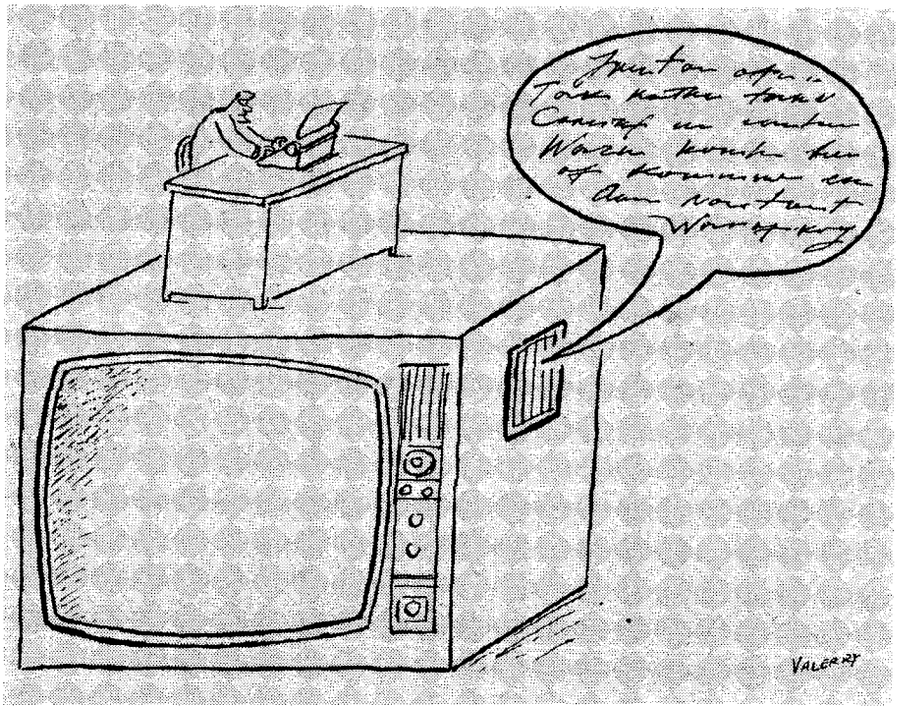
In the June issue of *Washington Monthly*, Charles Peters has something to say about this which is right on the mark. Peters points out the desire of journalists to seem to be hip and in-the-know, and he sees this as damaging: "Most political reporters are Jack Germonds — wryly witty, world-weary, not know-it-alls in an offensive manner, but finally wanting it to appear that they do know it all. Beneath this appearance there is often a truly colossal intellectual insecurity, which helps explain why, instead of covering the issues, they always turn elections into horse races — who's up and who's down in the polls — and into accounts of gaffes and scandals. If they write about issues they just might reveal what they don't know. So when they do write about them, they write boring synopses of the candidates' platforms — which fulfill the reporters' own prophecies that issues are boring — instead of lively analyses of candidate positions that put into perspective how those positions relate to the major problems of the country and how they don't."

I would add that it is not only intellectual insecurity but laziness, because it is a lot easier to talk about images and polls than to do the homework necessary to compare the economic ideas of Michael Dukakis, Bruce Babbitt, and Paul Simon, or to examine a candidate's record. Gary Hart's final outburst was arrogant and silly, but one thing he said did make sense: no one had bothered to talk about his ideas. I didn't find his ideas nearly as impressive as he did, but he did in fact have a record worth examining. Instead, we heard about the front runner falling behind, and about how "the field" looks now. An ordinary American newspaper is devoted to this sort of commentary and little else. It is true even of newspapers with better reputations: they offer the higher gossip. You would never know, reading or watching or listening to most of the sources Americans turn to for news, that the threat of nuclear war has not vanished with its passing as a faddish concern, or that the environment is still in trouble (ecology was a sixties' story).

As it has been presented, the Hart/Bakker/North stuff is entertaining, and the press shouldn't be ashamed when it distracts us from what really matters — the fact of our mortality, how well we live as husbands and wives and parents and friends, wrestling with ego, not being moved to stupid action by the stupid culture which surrounds us. The press is, in part, entertainment. It should be more than that, though. Maybe political and cultural analysis of the sort we need will bore most people; that's too bad. The people who ultimately give us our politics deserve to be better informed, even if they don't particularly like it, even if they don't pay attention. I don't mind much when the press gives us the bimbo stories, and it is entertaining to watch Jim Bakker and Jerry Falwell go at it tooth and nail — but the press has an obligation to give us something more.

There are some decent exceptions: Cable News Network is often better than any of the three major networks and seems willing to spend time, occasionally, exploring a story. PBS's *Frontline* has offered some fine reporting; a recent story on Marcos's theft of billions is a good example. But these are exceptions. Some of the networks complain that local stations will not allow them to expand the evening news to an hour, thus hampering the presumably better job they could do with more time. I don't blame the local outlets. CBS, until its recent shake-up, cut back foreign news coverage on the grounds that it bored most Americans. A longer evening news broadcast would allow the networks to sell expensive time to sponsors, and would give us twice as many stories about pandas, skydiving grandmothers, and lots of reports that end with the line, "Only time will tell." Station owners, for obvious reasons, would rather sell that time to local sponsors, allowing them to offer local news as shallow as the national news, reporters who ask the survivors of tragedies how they feel, and cretinous weather forecasters as irritating as anyone working at the network level.

As we move toward the election of a man who will be able to make world-ending decisions, we ought to know more about him than his rating in the polls, or how voters who know a little, maybe even less, than reporters do, feel about his image or his morals.



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HOMOSEXUALITY & THE PRIESTHOOD

QUESTIONS WE CAN'T KEEP IN THE CLOSET

RICHARD P. McBRIEN

Recent articles in such diverse publications as *Newsweek, Atlantic Monthly,* and *National Catholic Reporter* have called public attention to a phenomenon that used to be spoken of only by innuendo or in whispers: gay priests and gay seminarians.

Now no sensible person — and I hope I fall in that category — would enter a discussion of this sort without a good deal of hesitation. It is not the sort of terrain one ordinarily chooses to cross, at least not without an ample supply of protective gear and a painful awareness of the suspicions and misunderstandings that can be provoked by almost anything one says. My own reflections, I should underline, are highly tentative and not offered *motu proprio,* as it were, but in response to an inquiry by the editors. I am sure that this article will set a new *Commonweal* record for Most Question Marks; it contains, by contrast, very few answers. Nonetheless, these are questions that must be articulated and addressed, however haltingly. The alternative is leaving them to gossip, to unexamined, closed-door decisions, or to policy by default.

In fact, a long list of questions is being widely, if sometimes furtively, raised today.

● How many priests and seminarians are gay? How many of those are active homosexuals? What difference, if any, does the sexual orientation of a priest have on his pastoral ministry? Does it affect the gay priest's ministerial relations with heterosexual males, with women, with families, and with children? How does his homosexuality affect his relationship with heterosexual priests? Does the nature of these various relationships differ if the gay priest is sexually inactive rather than sexually active?

● If there is, in fact, a large body of gay priests in the United States, is there any relation between this phenomenon and the increasing visibility of child-molestation cases involving Catholic clergy?

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● What impact, if any, does the large number of gay priests have on recruiting candidates for the ordained priesthood, or the presbyterate? Has the public image of the Catholic priest in the United States changed in recent years, and, if so, to what extent is homosexuality in the priesthood a factor?

● Has the percentage of gay men attracted to the ordained priesthood increased in recent years? Are there more gays in the seminary today than there were in the years before Vatican II?

● What impact does the presence of a large number of gay seminarians have on the spiritual tone and moral atmosphere of our seminaries? Do gay seminarians inevitably create a gay culture in seminaries? To what extent are seminary faculty members a part of this culture? Are heterosexual seminarians "turned off" by the existence of such a culture? How many heterosexual seminarians have decided to leave the seminary and abandon their interest in a presbyteral vocation because of the presence of significant numbers of gays in seminaries and among the local clergy?

● Does the gay culture exist within diocesan and religious presbyterates? Is there a social bond of any kind among gay priests beyond the boundaries of the diocese or the religious community, nationally and internationally?

● How many U.S. Catholic bishops are homosexual? Do homosexual bishops give preference, consciously or not, to gay candidates for choice pastorates and diocesan positions? Is homosexuality a factor at all in the appointment of bishops themselves?

● Is there any relationship between the hierarchy's criticism and disciplining of gay rights groups, such as Dignity, and the presence of gays in the priesthood itself, including the episcopate? Do some gay priests and gay bishops actually take a harder line against out-of-the-closet homosexuals than do heterosexual priests and bishops?

● Of the thousands of priests who have resigned from the active ministry since Vatican II, how many of those priests were gay? Have gay priests left the priesthood in any significant numbers?

● What impact, if any, does the presence of gay priests

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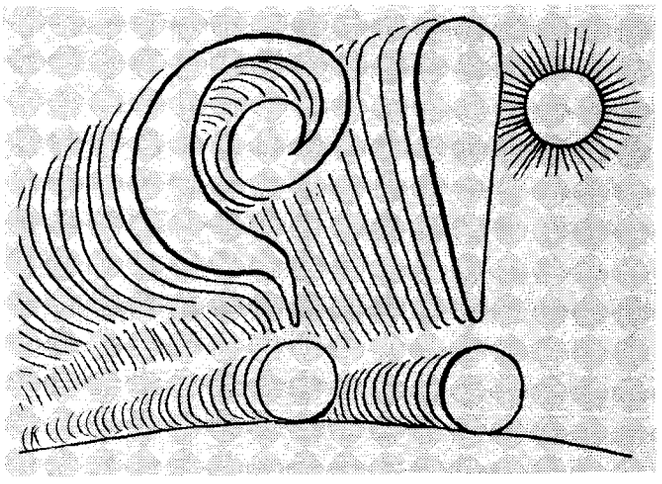
have on pressures for change in the church's discipline of obligatory celibacy for priests? Are gay priests, as a group, generally in favor of optional celibacy? Are gay priests opposed to the ordination of women to any greater degree than are heterosexual priests? Is there any discernible pattern to the opinions of gay priests not only on matters like optional celibacy and the ordination of women, but on the whole range of official teachings concerning sexual ethics?

- Are gay priests theologically more conservative or more progressive than heterosexual priests? Or is there no noticeable difference between the two groups? Are gay seminarians and gay priests drawn to the study and practice of liturgy more than are heterosexual seminarians and priests? Is the liturgical interest of gay seminarians and gay priests different from that of their heterosexual brethren? Is there a discernible gay influence on parish liturgy, seminary liturgy, college liturgy, and the liturgy celebrated in religious communities?
- Are gay seminarians and gay priests more, or less, committed to the church's social teachings than are their heterosexual brothers? Are gay seminarians and gay priests, more, or less, interested in politics, and in questions of social justice, human rights, and peace, than are heterosexual seminarians and priests? Are they more attuned, and more pastorally sensitive, to the needs of AIDS victims?
- How has the phenomenon of gay priests and gay seminarians manifested itself in other Christian traditions? How does its manifestation in these other communities differ from its manifestation within the Catholic church in the United States?

We don't have the answers to most of these questions. Too much research remains to be done. And some answers, it perhaps goes without saying, are simply beyond the capacity of ordinary research methods.

After all, how does one calculate the number of gay priests? Many gay priests don't even know they're gay, or cannot admit it to themselves and others.

How does one measure the impact of a gay priest on a parish community? Or on his relations with heterosexual males and with women?



How can one determine the number of young heterosexual men who have left the seminary because of the gay-culture problem or who, for similar reasons, have not seriously considered a presbyteral vocation?

It is clear from the very listing of all these questions that the phenomenon of gay priests and gay seminarians is exceedingly complex. It cannot be studied from within a single scientific discipline.

It needs first, and most obviously, the skills of trained sociologists, people who know how to gather and sift through data and then make some coherent sense of it all.

It needs, secondly, the insights of psychologists, professionals who can help us understand the polarities between heterosexuality and homosexuality, and between active and inactive human sexuality, as well as the ways, healthy and unhealthy alike, enabling and manipulative alike, in which individuals relate to one another.

The phenomenon of gay priests and gay seminarians needs, thirdly, the input of historians, both of the church and of culture, in order to situate the phenomenon in a wider context.

It needs, fourthly, the scholarly judgments of Christian ethicists and moral theologians, because the issues of human sexuality, and of homosexuality in particular, are not without profound moral content.

It needs, fifthly, the expertise of biblical scholars, since so many of the moral pronouncements on these matters presuppose particular interpretations of the classic scriptural references to homosexuality and homosexual behavior.

It needs, finally, the input of ecclesiologists, for the questions posed above concern the nature of the communities we call parishes and dioceses, and the purpose of the church's ministries within these communities.

Whatever limited measure of competence I may enjoy is in the last of these disciplines. I should hope, however, that representatives of the other disciplines, particularly sociology and psychology, will continue to contribute to the clarification of this complex phenomenon.

It is as an ecclesiologist, therefore, and not as a sociologist, psychologist, historian, ethicist, or biblical scholar, that I offer the following observations:

1. Ministry is always for the sake of the church, never for the sake of the individual minister. Thus, one doesn't become a minister to *become* a minister. One becomes a minister to *do* ministry.

Over the course of time, the presbyteral ministry has been transformed into something one aspires to rather than something to which one is called. In the earliest days of the church, individuals had to be coaxed, sometimes even cajoled, into entering presbyteral and especially episcopal ministry. The community, in the first instance, discerned the presence of the appropriate charisms and human qualities in one or another of the baptized, and then proceeded to apply every legitimate pressure upon the designee.

Today it works in just the opposite fashion. Young men (and, more frequently than before, older, "second-career"

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men) simply decide that they'd like to be a priest, and apply to a bishop, a seminary, or a religious community. Given the shortage of presbyteral vocations, a persistent and enterprising applicant can eventually find a place that will take him. In the absence of serious academic deficiencies or undeniably overt pathological behavior, the candidate will advance inexorably from first-year philosophy (or theology) to ordination and a pastoral assignment.

It is no secret that a least some of these applicants are not attracted primarily by the work of the presbyteral ministry but by the status and freedom from the ordinary demands of life that ordained ministry has often conferred.

Indeed, it is not inconceivable that the ordained priesthood is attractive to certain people precisely because it excludes marriage. To put it plainly: as long as the church requires celibacy for the ordained priesthood, the priesthood will always pose a particular attraction for gay men who are otherwise not drawn to ministry in general or to the presbyteral ministry in particular.

2. The evidence we do have at hand suggests that obligatory celibacy is the most significant negative factor in the recent decline in vocations to the presbyteral ministry.

By no serious standard — biblical, theological, doctrinal, sociological, psychological, historical — can celibacy be described as an essential requirement for effective presbyteral service. The original apostles were married, and so were priests and bishops for several of the earliest centuries of the church's history. To this day, Catholic priests in other rites are married, and the Latin-rite church itself has recently admitted former Episcopal priests into the Catholic priesthood, allowing them to function as married priests.

But only heterosexual priests, seminarians, and potential candidates would be interested in marrying. It is a matter of simple logic that the more gays we have in the priesthood and in our seminaries, the less pressure there will be, from within the body of Catholic clergy itself, for a fundamental change in the present discipline of obligatory celibacy.

The Catholic church's continued resistance to change will, in turn, accelerate the current trend wherein heterosexual males are deciding in ever-increasing numbers not even to consider the priesthood as a life-long ministerial vocation. The church will have to draw increasingly from the homosexual community for its priests and seminarians, whether it likes it or not, and whether it wants to admit it or not. And in a society where homosexuality continues to be stigmatized, the celibate priesthood can offer an esteemed and rewarding profession in which "unmarried and uninterested" status is self-explanatory and excites neither curiosity nor suspicion.

3. The presbyteral ministry is sacramental in more than the conventional sense, i.e., as a dispenser of sacraments. The ordained priesthood is also sacramental in a deeper theological sense: the priest, like the bishop, must embody the sacred realities with which he deals every day.

In the ordination rite the bishop is urged to remind the *ordinandi:* "Let the example of your life attract the followers of Christ, so that by word and action you may build up the house which is God's church."

Can a gay priest fulfill such a mandate? In principle, why not? The church does not condemn the homosexual; it censures only homosexual behavior. Individuals, including those otherwise heterosexual, may choose homosexual behavior; but no one — homosexual or heterosexual — chooses his or her underlying sexual predisposition. Homosexuals are human beings and Christians, whose dignity must be respected; and it is a sad sign of our failings as Christian people that we need to underline something so elementary.

Homosexuals who are not sexually active and who otherwise have all the necessary charisms and skills for presbyteral ministry have as much "right" to present themselves for ordination as heterosexual candidates. Indeed, some inactive homosexuals may be better qualified for ministry than some of their heterosexual counterparts. The issue here is ministerial aptitude, not sexual orientation — unless the latter should interfere with the former. But that is a matter for the church to determine, and if the church needs specialized guidance, it can turn to psychologists, not moral theologians.

If, on the other hand, *active* homosexuals are admitted and retained in the presbyterial ministry, and if their behavior should become known, then the principle of sacramentality is engaged. The actively gay priest sends a morally mixed message to the church and to the wider human community, to say the least.

We can't have it both ways. We cannot continue to denounce homosexual behavior in our official teachings and disciplinary decrees, and then adopt an inexplicably lax approach to the scrutiny of candidates for admission to our seminaries and for ordination. And that, of course, "goes double" for candidates for the episcopacy. We cannot say one thing in our doctrinal statements and countenance something entirely opposed to them in our church leaders.

4. By itself, the ordination of women would have no major impact on the phenomenon of gay priests and gay seminarians. Without a change in the discipline of obligatory celibacy, opening the priesthood to women could intensify the phenomenon, excluding heterosexual women for whom marriage is a serious option, and possibly resulting in an influx of lesbian priests and lesbian seminarians.

The editors asked specifically if I might have "any ecclesial reflections" to propose. I should say that I agree entirely with the central finding of a new and important study by Dean R. Hoge, of the department of sociology at the Catholic University of America, to be published in the fall by Sheed & Ward: *The Future of Catholic Leadership: Responses to the Priest Shortage.*

Dr. Hoge concludes that the shortage of priests in the United States is an institutional problem, not a spiritual problem. As such, it cannot be solved by prayer, fasting, and penance. To the extent that potential candidates are steering clear of the

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ordained priesthood because of obligatory celibacy, or the manner in which authority is exercised in the church, or for any similar institutional reason, the current shortage can only be corrected by institutional means.

At the top of the means-list, in my judgment, is the elimination of obligatory celibacy. No single institutional change would have more far-reaching effects on the composition and shape of the Catholic priesthood in the United States.

The repeal of the discipline of obligatory celibacy would remove one of the primary motives for the resignation of priests from the active ministry. Secondly, it would expand the pool of potential candidates for the ordained priesthood. (Dean Hoge notes that "the celibacy requirement is the single most important deterrent to new vocations to the priesthood, and if it were removed, the flow of men into seminaries would increase greatly, maybe fourfold.")

Thirdly, it would help correct the public's longstanding and deeply rooted perception of the Catholic church as a religion that regards sex as a necessary evil — the principal moral barrier standing between God and humankind. Obviously, these are serious reasons for the repeal of obligatory celibacy, and they exist quite apart from any questions raised about homosexuality and the clergy. But fourthly, and finally, such a repeal would remove all ambiguity from the vocational decisions of homosexuals. They would clearly choose the presbyteral ministry for the sake of the church, and not for what it might offer in terms of occupational respectability and freedom from social suspicion.

This essay has consisted of questions, hypotheses, tentative observations, and only one hard-and-fast proposal. It is not the last word on the subject, by any means. But the essay will have had at least some modest success if it should move the discussion forward by coaxing responsible parties, bishops especially, to confront the phenomenon of gay priests and gay seminarians more openly and more forthrightly, and then to *do* something about it.

As Dean Hoge argues in his book, to choose none of the available options (his book examines eleven)is to allow one of two fundamentally unacceptable options to prevail by default: either local communities will simply have to get along without the Eucharist, or lay members themselves will assume eucharistic leadership, with the result that Catholicism in the United States will gradually be replaced by a new form of American high-church congregationalism.

The Catholic church in the United States cannot afford either course.

THE POOR BREAK THROUGH

SOLILOQUY FROM NEW DELHI

JO McGOWAN

I was walking in Connaught Circus, the "fashionable" shopping area of New Delhi, the other day, trying to figure out how I had spent ninety-five rupees in less than six hours. Twelve for the taxi, five for the coffee, five for the postcards, five for the magazine, twenty-eight for the pants, five for the ice cream. It all added up to sixty rupees, plus the fifteen I had in my pocket made seventy-five. But I knew I had started out with nearly a hundred. Let's go over it again. Twelve for the taxi, five for the coffee . . . . I was interrupted by a beggar and the irony did not fail to strike me. My situation suddenly seemed preposterous.

She was a tiny shriveled woman holding the smallest baby I had ever seen. "How old is she?" I asked. "Six days." Six days! Six-days-old and out on the streets earning a living. And the mother, underweight, no doubt anemic, six-days-post-partum and already on her feet, looking for the next meal. I thought of my two children, born into health and warmth and security, and of myself, in for a week after their deliveries, waited on by family and friends.

I have lived in India for nearly six years now and I am no closer to understanding poverty than I was the day I arrived. Perhaps I am further away. Then at least, I was full of innocence and rage, grieved by everything I saw, moved to impossible gestures. Now, a bit jaded, a lot numb, and more and more caught up in my life and its complications (children, a home, work), I notice less.

But still, the poor break through. One day, the face of a child or an old man's smile will touch some unguarded spot in my heart, and down go the gates and I am flooded again. I never know what to do then. I invariably do too much in the beginning and too little in the end. I finish feeling vexed and dissatisfied and determined to find some better way. So far, I am still searching.

One day in January I was preparing lunch for my children and our houseguest, Alison, a young woman from Connecticut. She thought she heard a baby crying and went to the

JO McGOWAN *wrote regularly for the* National Catholic Reporter *before moving to India. She contributed "Marriage versus just living together" to the March 13, 1981* Commonweal.

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balcony to look. Down on the street, two young women were breaking up a pile of bricks while their babies lay on the side, both howling. The women motioned Alison that they wanted food and she came in to ask me what we could give them. We quickly heated up some lentils and rice and got some bread, fruit, and milk. Alison took it all down to them. After they had finished, they signaled for water. I went down this time and because I speak Hindi, talked with them. They told me a long involved story about having left their village in the neighboring state and, with their husbands, coming by train to Delhi. They had boarded the train without tickets, however, and their husbands were arrested and jailed in some tiny town along the way. The women had continued to Delhi. Their plan was to earn enough money in Delhi to pay the fine and get them all back to their village. Meanwhile they were sleeping on the street, with no blankets and no food. The babies, who were very scantily clothed, were both sick. There was no money for medicine.

I was quite moved (especially by the babies who, at eighteen months were two-thirds the size of my twelve-month-old, and both unable to walk) and told them that if they came back in the evening we would arrange for clothes and blankets. They returned at around 5 P.M. and we all sat down (they sat on the floor, refusing, as all the poor in India do, to sit on chairs) for tea and biscuits. We talked for some time, and I asked them again about their husbands. One woman began to answer while the other suddenly began giggling, so hard the tea spurted out of her mouth. The first woman spoke to her sharply in a dialect I didn't understand and the other woman quickly controlled herself.

At this point my husband arrived, accompanied by a friend of ours — an Indian settled in California. Until then, the women had assumed my husband was also a foreigner. When he turned out to be an Indian, their whole attitude changed. Their main interest seemed to be get out as quickly as possible. After I told their story, P.K. (our friend) offered to buy them blankets. We asked the two women to return the following morning to collect them. Meanwhile we gave them a few saris, baby clothes which Alison had gotten from a neighborhood relief center, and some money to buy food.

The next morning when they turned up at 7:30, I was amazed to discover that I was already weary of them. My husband, Ravi, who was deliberately taking a back seat in the whole affair, listened in silence as Alison and I discussed our suspicions and resentments in the kitchen while we prepared their breakfast.

- We no longer believed their story. If it were true, why did the woman burst out laughing when I asked about her husband?
- They were never satisfied. Every time one of us (Alison or I) was alone in the room, they would immediately ask for money.
- None of them, babies included, was wearing any of the things we had given them.
- They were ungrateful.

We could hardly bear to hear ourselves and yet we could not stop. We kept reminding each other that even if the story were not true, these people were still poor and needed help. And why should they be satisfied with what we chose to give, seeing, as any fool could, that we could easily give a hundred times more? Why should they be grateful for what was as much their birthright as ours?

We went back and forth, back and forth — justifying them in one breath, condemning them in the next. It was a puzzle and a shame. We felt miserable and wished we had never started the whole thing.

When they finally left (the babies having peed on the rug and spilt tea all over everything) Ravi told us that we had better decide in our own minds just how far we were willing to go. He told us that they would be back, that they would keep on returning, on one pretext or another, until they felt they had gotten all they could.

He was right. That evening they returned (well before he was expected home), and again we gave them tea and biscuits. The next morning, after he had left, one of them returned, saying she was now alone because the other had set out for the village. We gave her money and food, and she left. A few days later, the other one came, saying she had returned to the village, found no work, and so had come back to Delhi. We gave her some money and food, but told her this was the end. The next day *both* arrived. The whole scene had become comical — or would have been if it weren't for the sight of those two babies, so malnourished and lethargic, so different from my own chubby, well-fed children. We gave more money but it was clear to them that they were nearing the end of our patience. A few days later I saw them on the road with their husbands. They made one more rather feeble attempt after that (calling up to me from the street), and then gave up. I haven't seen them since.

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Dorothy Day often used to quote Dostoevsky in this light: "Love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing, compared with love in dreams." How true it is! I love so nobly in my dreams. I am willing to make incredible sacrifices, to be gracious and full of charity, ever patient and kind. But reality is so infinitely more difficult and complicated. I am no match for the circumstances I meet here.

When I was in grade school we used to be told stories in religion class about countries like India where the poor lived in the shadow of the rich and the rich never did anything for them. I remember longing to meet poor people, to be asked for food or clothing, to find a baby on my doorstep. How I would help them! I would never turn away.

And probably, at age ten, I would not have. Now, age twenty-nine, surrounded on all sides by the poor, I find myself in the unlikely position of the stereotypical, indifferent, rich woman. Recently we moved to a new apartment. It is in a complex partially financed by the city authorities and designed for middle-class people who would otherwise be unable to afford a home of their own. This particular complex is still under construction and we are one of the few families to have moved in. Right outside our window (twenty feet away) is a little shantytown — temporary hovels set up by the migrant laborers who are still at work building the place.

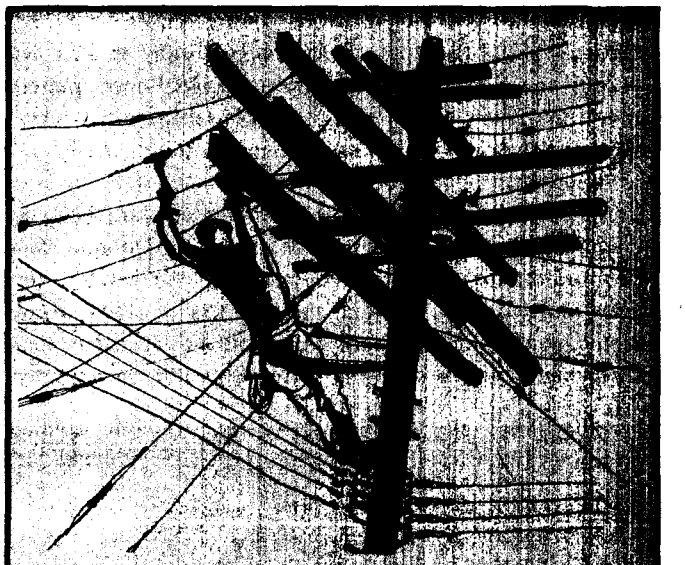
We had so many guests coming to stay with us for long periods of time that we finally decided to rent a really spacious apartment. Previously we were in a two-and-a-half room place — this one has five. Just now only the four of us are here and I wander from room to room and think of the people *just outside our windows* who are living in rooms the size of our kitchen. We have two bathrooms; they have to go into the fields. My children have a tricycle, books without end, and toys they hardly glance at. The children of the shantytown play with sticks and dirty water. The contrasts are so stark as to seem contrived.

But it's true. By some strange accident of birth, I am on the inside, with my husband and our beautiful children, surrounded by books and pictures, full cupboards and bureaus, and a well-stocked refrigerator, while they, by some equally strange but much crueler accident, are on the outside, struggling against hunger, sickness, want.

My parents are coming to visit us next month and I am dreading their reactions. I know that they will wonder, as I did on first arriving: "How can you be so indifferent?" It is the tragedy of our age — more tragic, indeed, than poverty itself, for it is indifference which allows poverty to continue.

And yet, I do not *feel* indifferent. I sit here by the hour, staring at the little shacks, at the half-naked children, the pregnant women, trying to think of some way to break through the walls that divide us. What stops me is the knowledge that the only real breakthrough involves me and my attachments. They are attachments so vast and diverse as to stagger the imagination. When I look at their lives and compare them to mine, I feel powerless to make a beginning.

There are all the physical comforts, to start with: food,



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clothing, a home. Then the extras: butter, cakes, cookies, coffee, four pairs of pants, six shirts, two nightgowns, a rug on the floor, pictures on the walls, music, windchimes, potted plants. But beyond the physical (and perhaps even more tenaciously clung to) are the attachments to time, space, privacy, freedom.

Even in my present, very limited involvement with the poor (the woman who comes every day for food, the laborers who ask for water, the children who clamor at the window for cookies and toast), I find that they invariably arrive at an "inconvenient" time — usually when both kids are asleep and I am trying to get some work done. But it is not simply demands of this type which can be satisfied and considered done with. A certain openness seems to be necessary, an eternal readiness — to talk, to listen, to be there.

I am slowly coming to an understanding of what Jesus meant when he said, "The poor you will always have with you." I used to understand the word "always" in a linear sense — that through all the ages there would be poor people. That linear view is certainly true, but within each age is another "always": the poor, once you let them into your life; are *always* there; every time you turn around, a hand is outstretched. There is no moment free of them; there is nowhere to hide. This is quite literally true. The more you give, the more you will be asked.

Henri Nouwen speaks somewhere of how middle-class the spirituality of the West is. For us, prayer, contemplation, and meditation all require the luxuries of time, quiet, privacy — luxuries which most of the world (the ones who will inherit the Kingdom) have never heard of. I am coming to the sad realization that my whole concept of love is similarly middle-class: I want to love, but on my terms. I want to give, but not all. In everything I do, there must be a "reasonable" limit, set, of course, by me. To just plunge in, with no end in sight, is too terrifying even to contemplate.

I started writing this article a year-and-a-half ago. I put it away because I couldn't finish it. I wanted to wrap it all up neatly, to somehow rationalize away my dilemma and come out in the end still looking like a good Christian. Of course it was impossible and I gave it up in despair.

Now, so many months later, I can see things a little more clearly. Growing up in America, with its strong belief in self-sufficiency, is at the heart of the problem. When I lie awake nights berating myself for being such a terrible person, I invariably drop off to sleep resolving to *try harder* to be good, as if the answer lay in my own efforts. Somehow it never occurs to me to give it over to God, to let her provide me with the strength I need. This is not mere sentimentality. It is the greatest strategical error one can make. To even think that one can face all the sadness and injustice of the world without a deep-rooted faith in God is ridiculous.

The other, perhaps less serious mistake lies in second-guessing God's will. Strange as it may seem, I have never asked God to let me know what she wants of me. I have always just assumed I knew: she wants me to be Dorothy Day.

I can see how silly this is now that I have written it down. "There are many gifts, but the same spirit" is not an idle statement, but a profound truth. We are called to be ourselves; the trick is in figuring out who we are and where we fit in the grand plan. As for me, I am quite sure it is no coincidence that a middle-class kid from Fall River, Mass. (who hates hot weather with a passion), should find herself living in India, one of the poorest countries in the world. Whether I am meant to be Dorothy Day or not, I know I am meant to work with the poor. How much longer I can elude the Hound of Heaven, and the shape my life will take once I am snared, is what remains to be seen.

Anne Porter

Native Americans

Blue eggshells
Empty in the grass,

On the rough-coated hills
Translucent,
The little pasture-rose.

Eagle's shadow
Sweeping the high pasture,
Wordless gospel.

. . .

Older than the sun
And younger than the dew,
Poor as the larks
He came into the world

And walked from town to town
Without a stick or sandals,
Carrying his new fire.

. . .

I saw him today on the street
In front of the post office,
Tired-out, young,
The age he must have been
The day they killed him,

Native pastor
Of a small parish
Up on the Reservation

He stood there listening
To an old Indian woman,
One of his people,

One of his disinherited
And cheated people.

Eagle's shadow
Sweeping the high pasture,
Silent gospel.

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DECENT EXPOSURE

'DEVIL' & 'ROXANNE'

Devil in the Flesh and *Jean de Florette* are two of the most stylish summer movie imports. Both boast long pedigrees in literary and film history. *Jean de Florette* (of which more next time) is based on the Provence novels of supreme neorealist filmmaker Marcel Pagnol, and won eight nominations for 1986 Cesars. *Devil in the Flesh* is an Italian film loosely based on the classic 1923 novel by Raymond Radiguet—a kind of French *Farewell to Arms*—in which a French woman married to a soldier at the front forgets her "duty" and carries on a wild affair with a high school student. Claude Autant-Lara first made it into a slightly shocking film in 1947.

The new *Devil* shakes off the past, so to speak, like a burdensome garment. The setting is now Italy, where director Marco Bellachio freely adapts Radiguet's tale of sexual and political liberation with all the frankness that modern cinema can tolerate. Specifically, he inserts several vivid carnal scenes between his heroine (Maruschka Detmers) and a young man who stirs her passion. The film thus raises the issue of how one even partially recommends an X-rated film and still takes seriously the problem of media sensationalism and its corrupting effects.

In some circles, of course, it is considered gauche (actually, *droite*) to say anything good about ratings at all. Not long ago, in order to get an R rather than an X rating, the director of *Angel Heart* was forced to trim a bizarre, blood-tinged sex scene involving an older man and a teenager who turned out to be the man's daughter. The hue and cry that resulted would have made one think that *Angel Heart* was a long-lost Eisenstein rather than a movie that quickly dropped out of sight. The fuss illustrated the unwillingness of too many critics to acknowledge that the X rating performs a service: even more than PG and R ratings, it alerts parents and theater managers to their moral responsibility to children and teenagers. There are some spectacles which should simply not be seen by everyone. I only wish that such efforts at *censorship* (horrors!) could be aimed at youthful viewers of violent films with no redeeming social value. If only the Ratings Board X-ed slasher films! If only libertarians would stop being as prudish and taboo-ridden in regard to any hint at moral limits as prim Victorians ever were in regard to sex!

Nevertheless, not every X film is pornographic. *Devil in the Flesh* certainly contains many scenes whose explicit sexuality will bring a blush to anyone this side of paradise; one scene in particular surely merited the X. But the film contains no violence, no degradation forced on its heroine; the sexuality, [illegible] is central to the story of a woman coming of age in the midst of some highly acute emotional confusion. How [illegible] judge a film that mixes equal parts of indecency and [illegible]

What is really objectionable is not so much the sex as the politics, especially Bellachio's fantasy that ecstasy begets [illegible] His plot suggests that law-abiding citizens are incapable of passion. Detmers is engaged to a repentant terrorist who [illegible] her with his desire to lead a normal life— "*normale*" like drones; "*normalissima*." His adieu to terrorism, in short, makes him less sexy. As "Church Lady" might say (with apologies) on *Saturday Night Live*, "Isn't that special?"

This Jesuitical cant can be excused to a small degree. Bellachio lives in a country where moral codes may still [illegible] cultural conservatism in sex and politics. His [illegible] however, are hoary. The idea that capitalists hate sex [illegible] and outdated (and disproved by the industry's enthusiasm for films like this one). When Bellachio adds a parallel between love and madness, I trembled, fearing Foucault. Ken Russell (cf. his travesty on Byron, *Gothic*), and that other adepts of ecstasy were about to snake their way in and lecture us on the merits of insanity.

Fortunately, Detmers's performance saved much of the film, especially her torturous oscillations between mental anguish and radiant, stunning laughter; one could listen to that laugh for a long time. Bellachio skillfully employs bright, brazenly colored photography and sparkling settings. Lucky that his technique and her acting are compelling on their own terms, without ideology.

Roxanne is also loosely based on a French classic, Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*. One twist catches the essence of its goofy, but often enjoyable take-off on tradition. The film's title character is played by Daryl Hannah, who reveals herself as a superb comedienne in tandem with Steve Martin, starring in his own screenplay. Hannah hasn't been this good since *Splash*, and Martin since *All of Me*. She plays an amateur astronomer visiting the Pacific Northwest. On a starry night in her romantic rooftop observatory, draping her golden tresses over a telescope and watching "binary stars that long to make conjunction," she moans to Martin that she wants to name a comet "Kowalski." Martin retches until she indignantly informs him "that's my last name."

The film is directed by Fred Schepisi, but its ruling Puck is Martin. His humor in the past has been very uneven. It can be vulgar and sophomoric; it can also yield witty social commentary and inspired slapstick. *Roxanne* mines much of his best vein and, like the heroine's nomenclature, comically blends lyrical and banal. It's a mock-heroic—thoroughly crackpot but periodically brilliant in its revision of a classic.

Yes, Steve Martin has a Nose, a Very Big Nose, less like Jose Ferrer's than Pinocchio's. He's a fire chief in a big town/small city, cusped between funky neighborliness and gentrification from tourism and skiing. As the mayor (still a

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fireman part-time) gloats, "It could be another Aspen." But will it burn down before its moment in the sun (or snow)? Only the Nose knows.

Not all of *Roxanne*'s elements blend perfectly. The gorgeous landscape remains mostly a passive setting. The fine domestic gothic architecture (from the post-pioneer 1890s) is never properly imperiled by flames. The fire plot is weakly executed, with too much reliance on keystone-cops routines. Martin also tosses in tangential one-liners that you can tell come from a piggy bank of unused jokes (Q: "What's a light year?" A: "Same as a regular year but with less calories"). Singly, his lines are funny; too often, they're dramatically flat.

Still, Martin's incidental satire often amuses. When Hannah describes herself as "ironic," Martin responds in a flat, small-town voice, "Oh, people here ski and smoke dope. We don't get irony here." He watches for humor at every turn (quipping on a long stairway: "I haven't climbed this many steps since I went to the Maharishi"). There's a Groucho inside Martin; he just one-lines one time too many.

Perhaps Martin was trying to do too much with this film. Where he succeeds best is the romance, which both imitates and updates Rostand. It has four characters: Hannah's Roxanne, the Hunk of a fireman she falls in love with by sight, Martin, and the inevitable Nose. Line readings with deft hesitations keep It a continual source of humor. People can't keep their eyes off It; when they stare, they often put their foot in their mouth, Hannah first, with a hilarious comment when she meets It. She likes Martin as a friend, but for obvious reasons is drawn more to the strong, silent Hunk (Rick Rossovich), whom she is led to mistake for an intellectual. Alas, he's a jerk. His greatest pleasure, he says, is "taking meat sandwiches into the redwoods."

The farcical results include an inevitable, full-fledged revision of *Cyrano*'s balcony scene, with Martin pleading the Hunk's suit in lyrical terms Rossovich cannot even understand; romanticism has rarely been more gloriously spoofed. But Martin also transcends the mockery with specific contemporary points. Hannah's Roxanne is a type of single American woman who is often faced with constant pressure from men who can't handle her intelligence. The Hunk is horrified by anything but sex; otherwise, he trembles, "I'd have to talk to her." There are, amazingly, people (men) like this.

If anything, Martin lets him off too easy. Martin also should have pushed his sexual satire harder, and questioned women as well as men. At the end of the balcony scene, the Hunk accidentally puts his finger on something about Roxanne. Turning to Martin, he exclaims, "She wants *us*. She wants somebody that looks like me and talks like you!" The plot tutors Hannah out of her mistake. But the screenplay could have used more comment on the stereotypes about "attractive" males that cripple relations between the sexes today almost as much as male chauvinism. How many smart, kind men, because they are not "Hunks,"fear approaching women? How many women unconsciously conspire in their own loneliness by acquiescing in the "Hunk" definition of male glamour? *Tootsie* and *All of Me* assaulted sexual stereotypes with gusto; *Roxanne* slaps at them too politely.

TOM O'BRIEN

BOOKS

A history of late bloomers

PAGANS AND CHRISTIANS
Robin Lane Fox
Alfred A. Knopf, $35, 799 pp.

Elizabeth A. Clark

In this ambitious book, Robin Lane Fox seeks not only to provide a survey of paganism and Christianity from the second to the mid-fourth century, he also attempts to overturn several standard theories of paganism and Christianity in late antiquity, and to ground as historical "fact" some ancient reports whose credibility has been doubted by previous scholars. The author, a fellow of New College, Oxford, and a university lecturer in ancient history, won awards for his earlier book, *Alexander the Great*.

Throughout, Lane Fox argues against the view that Christianity was contiguous with paganism: even when Christians appropriated pagan sites and symbols, their meaning, he claims, was entirely changed. He points to fundamental changes "in people's self-awareness, and in their opportunities and social organization," not least, the shift from the pagan view of "error" as the explanation for misfortune to the Christian view of "sin." Lane Fox also argues for the lateness of Christianity's triumph: he estimates that by 250 A.D., only about 2 percent of the Empire's population was Christian, and that after Constantine an entire century passed before the balance decisively tipped toward the Christians. In contrast, Lane Fox champions the vigor of paganism in ways that readers who believe the Christian apologists' claim that paganism was "dead" would not expect.

The first section of the book, on paganism, is undoubtedly the most important. Disputing the view popularized by E.R. Dodds some decades ago that late antiquity was fraught with spiritual "anxiety" to which mysticism, magic, and mystery cult offered non-rational

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remedies, Lane Fox shifts the focus away from human anxiety to divine anger, away from the mystery cults to traditional civic religion. Against other scholars who deemed pagan religion to be a mindless performance of ritual devoid of theological and philosophical content, Lane Fox claims that paganism was both articulate and theologically oriented.

Lane Fox centers traditional civic religion in the worship of divinities whose anger must be avoided or (if incurred) propitiated. To explicate the meaning of "civic religion," he provides a vivid sketch of late ancient cities (many of them larger than the cities of 1600 A.D.) that relied heavily on the citizens' love of honor and civic patriotism to motivate them to accept expensive municipal responsibilities, such as the erection and upkeep of public buildings. The second century A.D. witnessed a notable spurt of temple building: no sooner had Jesus died, Lane Fox writes, than shrines and temples "began to spring back to life in a resurrection which nobody could deny." The gods could be approached through animal sacrifices and public ceremony; when they felt friendly, they might manifest themselves directly to humans in supportive "close encounters," or indirectly through dreams and oracles: "That God could visit man was the least novel feature of Christian teaching in a pagan's eyes."

The chapter on oracles ("the language of the gods") is among the most impressive in Lane Fox's generally impressive book. Here he relies heavily on the scholarship of Louis Robert, whose work on inscriptions has enriched our understanding of the Roman Empire. Lane Fox cites evidence to prove that the popularity of oracles remained into late antiquity; indeed, the number of oracular shrines actually increased between the years 80 and 200 A.D. (For example, over 300 civic dedications are attested from about 100 A.D. onward at the Claros shrine in Asia Minor.) The public and well-placed locations of oracular shrines also point to their significance, as do the appearances of forged oracles and "fake" oracular prophets. Moreover, inscriptions that list the questions asked of the oracles by civic notables and the answers they received demonstrate a continuing interest in traditional theology and philosophy. Lane Fox's emphasis on oracles as central to pagan religiosity buttresses his claim that late paganism remained a predominantly *oral* phenomenon, in contrast to Christianity, which relied heavily on written texts. The liveliness of pagan civic religion well into the third century suggests that converts to Christianity "were not abandoning a static or dying religious culture," but "were joining the most extreme option in a period when religious issues were lively. . . ."

Why and how, then, did Christianity "triumph"? The triumph, in Lane Fox's eyes, was very slow in coming, particularly to the countryside. He proposes several interrelated answers to the question. One rests on the changing social status of civic officials in the second and especially the third centuries: as the wealthier classes began to absent themselves from municipal service, room was opened up for men of "lesser families" (including Christians) to assume more important roles in the government of their towns and cities.

Second, against the "growing social exclusivity" that enlarged the gap between the very wealthy and everyone else, Christianity posed an alternative vision in which selflessness, charity, and brotherly love were coupled with a powerful ideal of community. Since these values could be espoused without the overthrow of the existing social system, people of property could comfortably become Christians. Third, the organization of Christian communities also contributed to Christianity's triumph: the distinctive style of Christian leadership exemplified by bishops lent both a cohesion and a source of authority to Christianity that paganism lacked.

Before Christianity's triumph, however, it suffered through darker days of persecution. Lane Fox's emphasis on pagan *theology* provides him with an explanation for persecutions: pagans were genuinely angry that Christians had dishonored their gods. In his discussion, Lane Fox centers on the martyrdom of Pionius, which he believes he can document as "historical event" from inscriptions that mention persons with the same names as some of the principal actors in Pionius's *Martyrdom*.

Lane Fox's chief attempt at "rehistoricization," however, concerns the Christian commitment of the Emperor Constantine, described as "the most tireless worker for Christian unity since St. Paul." He criticizes those scholars who view Constantine's Christianity as a "compromise": they rely too heavily on court publicity issued on Constantine's behalf rather than on Constantine's own letters, edicts, and actions, especially his program of church-building. Lane Fox's argument centers on the speech reproduced by Eusebius in his *Life of Constantine*, usually entitled "Oration to the Saints." Against earlier scholars such as Norman Baynes, Lane Fox argues that Eusebius's version of the speech represents a faithful rendition of Constantine's own words and beliefs. Lane Fox pinpoints the occasion and the date of the speech: "Good Friday" of 325, before the Council of Antioch presided over by Ossius of Cordova. He does not underdramatize the significance of the event: "The public statements and circular letters of 324/5 mark the start of a new chapter in the life of the Greek-speaking city culture."

Lane Fox has succeeded at a nearly-impossible task: to write a book teeming with scholarly detail that can be enjoyed by non-specialists. Whether or not the non-specialist receives a "correct" understanding of paganism and Christianity will be more fiercely debated. The following issues will undoubtedly be raised for discussion. First, has not Lane Fox underplayed the progress of Christianization, perhaps in order to showcase his important interpretation of Constantine? Was Christianity so slow to catch on before the time of Constantine, and did it take an entire century after Constantine for the balance between Christian and pagan to be "tipped"? If we posit more rapid Christianization in the late third and early fourth centuries, as some evidence suggests, the fuller Christianization of towns and cities by the late fourth century (accepted by many scholars) seems more understandable.

A second point that will occasion dis-

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agreement is Lane Fox's almost exclusive concentration on the Christians who "won," i.e., the "orthodox." He discounts the diversity of early Christian belief and practice, giving the reader a rather monolithic view of early Christianity. The rapidity with which he dismisses Walter Bauer's theory on the lateness of Christian orthodoxy in some areas is startling, as is his excessively brief consideration (and snide denunciation) of the Gnostics. Our growing knowledge of Gnosticism precludes such an approach for many recent scholars of early Christianity.

A third point of debate will focus on Lane Fox's unsympathetic treatment of asceticism. His very language reveals his bias: renunciatory practices are called "types of refined torture" (p. 370) and ten or more times, ascetics are referred to as "overachievers." Why asceticism is treated *before* "visions and prophecy" (largely centered on second-century evidence) or "persecution and martyrdom" (late first- to early fourth-century evidence) is not entirely obvious. To be sure, Lane Fox concentrates his discussion on ascetic manifestations in the first two-and-a-half Christian centuries rather than on the development of Egyptian asceticism and monasticism in the early fourth century, but by focusing on the earlier rather than later material, he downplays the fact that asceticism by the time of Constantine's death was in some areas rapidly becoming a mass movement that developed out of an already-prominent Christianity. Lane Fox's emphasis on the relative freedom that asceticism offered to women, however, seems entirely correct to this reviewer.

Lane Fox hoped that his book would establish "something new on the topic of pagan oracles, the story of an early martyrdom, and a text ascribed to Constantine himself." On the last two points — Pionius's martyrdom and Constantine's "Oration to the Saints" — scholars may debate whether Lane Fox has been too eager to accept as "historical" some evidence that appears less convincing to others. Yet even here, he has undoubtedly opened the way for lively discussion of the issues. On the point of pagan oracles, his contributions will be readily acknowledged. His use of inscriptions pertaining to paganism help him to unravel the evidence of the second, third, and early fourth centuries better than scholars who rely on texts alone to assist them in their historical reconstruction.

BITTERSWEET SIDES OF LIFE

THE LAST WORTHLESS EVENING
Andre Dubus
Godine, $15.95, 214 pp.

John B. Breslin

Being a book addict has its rewards. I first discovered Andre Dubus's stories two years ago on one of my compulsive prowls through a local bookstore noted for half-price review copies and other literary bargains. The book was Dubus's last collection of stories, *The Times Are Never So Bad,* and one of the first pieces I read was the finale, "A Father's Story." I was hooked. Several months later when a former publishing colleague asked me to put together an anthology of contemporary Catholic fiction, I knew right away one story that would be in it.

The pleasures Dubus offers are considerable: a lyrical realism often focused on the aching gaps of incomprehension and infidelity that mark intimate relationships; a confident ability to enter into the consciousness of the estranged, women as well as men; a remarkable sense of place, especially of the deep South and the mill area of New England northwest of Boston, as well as Marine bases and Navy ships anywhere; and, finally, an acutely and self-confessedly Catholic sensibility that seeks and finds redemption in the sacramental union of matter and form — the physical world in all its beauty and imperfection transformed by ritual into prayer.

With the exception of an early novel, *The Lieutenant,* and the more recent *Voices from the Moon* (1984), Dubus has stuck to briefer forms, novellas and short stories. *The Last Worthless Evening* is the fifth collection of such works, tilting heavily this time toward novellas. What astonishes is the range of mood and sensibility Dubus controls within an essentially naturalistic, even old-fashioned, narrative style. The fireworks here are sparked not by innovative techniques but by a sharp eye, a resonant ear, and a passionate mind. Take this description of a five-year-old's stunned reaction to being thrown across a room by his enraged father:

> Nothing in his body had ever broken before. He touched the flesh, the bone beneath it. He was crying as, in his memory, he had never cried before, and he not only did not try to stop, as he always had, with pride, with anger; but he wanted to cry this deeply, his body shuddering with it, doubling at his waist with it, until he attained oblivion, invisibility, death. Somehow he knew his childhood had ended. In his pain, he felt relief too: now on this couch his life would end.

Or this low-keyed account of disarming a live shell at sea:

> They worked quietly. They murmured to each other, passed and received screwdrivers and pliers, finally spoke hardly at all: *Okay,* they said, or *That's that,* and once Stark picked up the open manual and look at a diagram and showed it to the chief who nodded and leaned over again with his screwdriver. There was such concentration in their faces that it seemed their bodies existed only to keep their faces alive. And their hands, their fingers. Then the fuse was off, resting bent in the chief's hand, looking as lethal still as it

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had on the ground. Then at once Stark and the chief started laughing. I watched them. Then I smiled.

Dubus makes you see and hear his stories as he makes you feel your pulse quicken at our human ability to inflict and suffer life's violence as well as defuse it. The dark side of existence certainly gets its fair share of attention in these stories. It may take the shape of an insensitive, cruelly sentimental white officer who forces on a junior black officer his "enlightened" views about race in the noble Southern tradition. Or it may appear as a doctor who preys on women obsessed with weight or as a passionate archaeologist who abandons the wife and child in whom he has no personal interest.

Dubus's lyricism comes without blinkers; still, he is anything but cynical. Ties of family and friendship occupy the highest positions in Dubus's scheme of things despite their frequent betrayal. Archimedes Nionakis, full-time runner, part-time lawyer, and occasional private investigator, avoids commitments himself but recognizes their spiritual and tangible rewards:

> My brothers fled to beautician school, then borrowed money and opened a shop and married Greek women, lovely Greek women who bore children who are respectful, beautiful, and well behaved, not at all like American children, though they speak English without the accents of their parents. Anyone visiting my brothers' houses will be given a drink and food, and always there are feta cheese and olives, and my brothers' wives keep stuffed grape leaves and spinach pies in the freezer.

Similarly, Claire, the abandoned wife, builds her new life around her daughter Molly, offering attention and understanding but also a premature adulthood that in turn invites a bittersweet loss of innocence. And Rose, the mother of the battered child, achieves redemption for years of passive acceptance of paternal brutality in one selfless act of maternal instinct. But it is the narrator who sees this, not Rose, who considers herself justly punished in the loss of her children.

Author and narrator sound most nearly at one in "Rose": for observation and moral passion serve here the conviction that only our truest stories, carefully attended to, can achieve communion. What shines through in this novella, as in each of the other three in its own way, is clear-sighted compassion, the teller's ability to enter into the compromised, evolving, enfleshed world of the protagonists and give them their due. Such total comprehension does indeed breed forgiveness, or, at least, it challenges our often heedless rush to judgment.

In inviting our moral responses to his stories, Dubus consciously aligns himself with a long and honorable, if recently neglected, tradition in fiction. Chekov is there, and Conrad, and in this collection, especially, I hear echoes of Faulkner from whom Dubus has taken his title. In ordinary lives lived in ordinary places, Dubus finds his own kind of high seriousness where souls are made and unmade by human choice and the surprising actions of grace. The linking of those last two and the pervasive concern for the humanizing effect of ritual reveal how deeply Catholicism has informed Dubus's imagination. His mastery of form and psychological sureness of touch in this volume indicate how broad and deep that imagination is. Both are reasons to rejoice.

REMODELING THE CONSTITUTION

NO STATE SHALL ABRIDGE
THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT AND THE BILL OF RIGHTS

Michael Kent Curtis
Duke University, $24.95, 275 pp.

Howard N. Meyer

We have traditionally referred to the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution as our "Bill of Rights." In the first through eighth there are thirty restrictions on governmental treatment of individuals. An 1833 Supreme Court ruling held that the rights thus enumerated shielded people only against abridgment by the national government. The states could do as they pleased, subject only to their local constitutions.

The Civil War led to a major remodeling of the federal Constitution, by three extremely significant amendments. Authority over important economic, juridical, and political matters, previously the exclusive concern of the states, was given to the central government. Slavery was outlawed by the Thirteenth; racial bars to voting by the Fifteenth. The Fourteenth Amendment, the guarantor of "equal protection of the laws," actually covers several subjects.

This unique and immensely valuable book is addressed to only one facet of the Fourteenth, but one of great consequence. Was the amendment intended to curtail the exemption the states had to ignore individual rights specified in the Constitution? To what extent was the amendment allowed to serve as intended; what roles have judges and scholars played in what proves to have been a checkered history?

This work deserves an audience wider than the legal profession and academic historians. Because its subject has involved intermittent controversy and because of the twists and turns the story takes, it makes fascinating reading. Constitutional history touching on aspects of interracial injustice has been so bedeviled and often distorted by the input of special pleaders, it cannot be safely left to lawyers, law schools, and judges.

Michael Curtis is evidently an "emancipated" white Southern attorney, which helps him deal with the subtleties and

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complexities of a legal issue implicating race relations history. He artfully introduces his subject by quoting the relevant words of the Fourteenth Amendment and says, "A reasonable reader might conclude that the Fourteenth Amendment was intended to change things so that the states could no longer violate rights in the federal Bill of Rights . . . I believe the reader would be right."

Eminent support for Curtis's reading of the text comes from Learned Hand, probably the most respected federal judge who never made it to the Supreme Court. In his book, *The Bill of Rights*, Judge Hand declared "if one were to take literally some of the language, there would be reason to say that the Fourteenth Amendment now had in its bosom all the first eight." This was in 1958, before the Court had gone very far in implementing the intention plainly suggested by the text.

Because the amendment's language was never taken literally, we haven't "amended" common usage to conform with what Judge Hand did when he mentioned the Bill of Rights: "by which I mean the first eight *and the fourteenth* amendments of the Constitution . . ." (emphasis supplied). If the Curtis book gets the attention it should and its message percolates sufficiently, a full-breadth conception of the Bill of Rights in conformity with Hand's will come to be accepted by the wordsmiths, the iconographers, and the fundraisers "pitching" to finance their defense of the Bill of Rights.

The value of the work's demonstration of the amendment's legitimacy in serving as shield against state tyranny is illustrated by the controversial 1985 address of Attorney General Meese to the American Bar Association. The speaker's premise was that subjection of the states to Bill of Rights standards was created by judges, not by Constitution draftsmen. Thus he argued that cases so treating the states were significant examples of a judicial malaise, to be cured by his prescription for a "jurisprudence of original intention." That Meese initiative is confounded by Curtis's proof that the framers meant what they said.

Sweeping aside the obscurantism and cloudy mythology that so long prevailed about abolitionism, Civil War, and Reconstruction, Curtis makes a compelling case: State support of slavery as a principal economic component of society required freedom to combat opposition, whether from pulpit, soapbox, or handbill, or by direct action from within or without. The 1787 founding framers' kit of slavery-aids included the paramount "state's right" — the license for repression via disregard of the human rights listed in the federal charter's first eight amendments. These ranged from freedom of religion and speech in the First to immunity from cruel and unusual punishment, as specified in the Eighth.

In the aftermath of the Civil War and the Thirteenth Amendment's outlawry of slavery came Andrew Johnson's too-rapid restoration to power of Confederate adherents. The first great congressional investigation, conducted by the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, found that there had been a re-imposition of economic subjection by introduction of what amounted to a caste system, as economic replacement for slavery. This, it was found, was accompanied by the pattern of repression that members of the Committee, as anti-slavery politicians, had become familiar with in the decades before the war. A two-tiered society could not afford to tolerate dissent or respect the human rights specified in the first eight amendments any more than a slave society could. One need only read the language of the first paragraph of the Fourteenth in the reflected light of that history to resolve any doubt about what the framers meant.

Soon after the amendment's ratification, as the author explains, "the Court effectively nullified the intent to apply the Bill of Rights to the states." This was the inevitable accompaniment of disregard of the Fourteenth command that the states grant "equal protection of the laws." Just as under slavery when equality was denied, courts found it necessary to deny the right that would make it possible to fight for equality.

Conventional legal scholarship deserves no medals for its performance during the painful, long drawn-out return from nullification. As late as 1947, there were few to protest Justice Frankfurter's dismissal as an "eccentric exception," the one nineteenth-century jurist, John Marshall Harlan (served 1877-1911), who was a persistent dissenter from the Court's abandonment of the Fourteenth's rights role. Curtis traces and refutes the contemporary apologists for the Court's performance, notably Charles Fairman and Raoul Berger. So well done and significant is his contribution that the book, as Leonard W. Levy has written, should "alter the path of scholarship."

REVIEWERS

ELIZABETH A. CLARK'S *most recent book,* Ascetic Piety and Women's Faith, *won the 1986 Mellon Prize.*

JOHN B. BRESLIN, S.J., *edited* The Substance of Things Hoped For *(Doubleday).*

HOWARD N. MEYER *is the author of* The Amendment That Refused to Die.

PETER WILD *is a professor of English at the University of Arizona.*

FRED ROTONDARO *is executive director of the National Italian-American Foundation.*

CELESTIAL SALVATION

EMPTY PROMISES
THE GROWING CASE AGAINST STAR WARS
Edited by John Tirman
Beacon, $7.95, 238 pp.

Peter Wild

"Money from Heaven" proclaims one business journal, dazzled over the prospect of Star-Wars dollars falling from the government into the lap of industry. People once gazed into the firmament with divine wonder; ironically, now they look starward with a different kind of salvation in mind. What once symbolized a future promise, in the twentieth century has become a future

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battlefield. Yet, thanks almost entirely to President Reagan and his proposal for the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), there's hope here, too. He would militarize the heavens, turning the celestial regions into an impenetrable shield to ward off incoming Soviet missiles. In the process of building thousands of these anti-missile satellies, he offers financial salvation by pumping billions of dollars into the arms industry.

If, as some students of civilizations argue, humanity is shaped by its pursuit of persistent myths, accidentally or not, the present administration has hit upon a brilliant scheme to guide old longings into the appealing technological razzle-dazzle of the twentieth century. From the settling of a wild continent to the finding of a cure for cancer, Americans have always been energized by seemingly impossible challenges. We'd like to believe that by turning on our Yankee ingenuity and throwing enough money at a problem we could build a bridge to the moon if we put our minds to it.

Missing in the self-flattery is the often overlooked fact that many such a well-laid plan has not turned out as expected, has in fact become the mischievous genie released from his bottle. Despite our yearnings, we haven't yet found a cure for the common cold, let alone for cancer. And our automobile economy, for a few decades America's financial glory, now threatens the nation with perilous air, ruined neighborhoods, and an economic marriage quite likely on the rocks. Star Wars may well offer us just such uncertain gifts.

But, psychology and history aside, will SDI deliver on its grand promise? After all, from the building of the transcontinental railroad to placing a man on the moon, splashy projects have chronically had their detractors, their grousing Luddites. The contributors to *Empty Promises*, an eminently cool-headed evaluation of this controversial subject, hardly can be accused of knee-jerk naysaying or lack of patriotism. Computer scientists, consultants to the Defense Department, and researchers at the country's most prestigious universities, speak with authority in their particular fields. They echo a large and growing number of their scientific colleagues who are concluding that Star Wars not only would be an economic, political, and social fiasco but the concept itself is so riddled with "intrinsic weaknesses" that it simply won't work. And these are, mind you, men and women who stand to benefit from the windfall of Star-Wars research dollars.

It might be noted before proceeding, that collections of this sort, essays by a heterogeneity of writers, tend to have the noisome features of overlapping and disjunction. Thankfully, editor John Tirman has kept these potential chuckholes to a minimum, and the book clearly leads us through the three major areas surrounding SDI's inherent difficulties: politics, technical issues, and implications for the arms race. One guesses that it's on this second issue, scientific feasibility, that Star Wars will rise or fall, come to fruition or be laid aside after Mr. Reagan's departure, as one more example of an initially appealing but finally unworkable Buck-Rogers fantasy. For Congress, especially in these hard budgetary times, remains skeptical in the face of the furor being raised by hard-nosed science.

The technical chapters do not make the easiest reading; on the other hand, they present arguments capable of being digested by interested lay readers, yet include sufficient detail to satisfy specialists. Without going into the intricacies here, they come down to this. Star Wars is mind-bogglingly complex. It would require deployment of thousands of satellites with millions of parts. They must react instantly and work with precise coordination to defang a Soviet attack. They must be invulnerable to the high-tech assemblages of decoys and anti-missile-missiles that the Soviets are bound to launch to confuse and destroy this skittish defense. And since the only true, full-scale trial of Star Wars can be a nuclear attack itself, the whole celestial shebang can be tested only once — the first and probably only time it's used.

So we have a gargantuan complex, far more ganglionic than anything ever constructed, that can't be tested but must work once and work perfectly. All this should give pause to a nation still scratching its head over the space shuttle disaster involving a single rocket, and still upset about the worldwide consequences of the radioactive cloud over Chernobyl, before rushing in where the angels themselves would fear to tread.

So that's the most obvious and most-often mentioned objection to SDI. There are others, more subtle but equally wide-ranging in their implications. Most of them involve money. We are talking, of course, in terms of billions upon billions, something in the order of a trillion dollars. Their channeling into Star Wars would drain the country's scientific talent away from a host of other pressing problems such as toxic waste and acid rain, to concentrate them on this one, doubt-filled area. And what of the social programs, the medical research, and aid to the aged and malnourished, that will go a-begging in this massive distortion of the budget?

With good reason, even high-ranking officers in the Pentagon are furrowing their brows. Looking into a Star-Wars future, they see a United States made militarily vulnerable as funding for conventional forces shrinks to fund a one-shot monstrosity. Star Wars, the quixotic brain child of a president given to the dramatics of television, but conceived in ignorance of warnings from many of the country's top physicists, would bleed the nation white to deploy an at-best unreliable and for certain bewilderingly expensive system.

IN BRIEF

IN SOLITARY WITNESS: THE LIFE AND DEATH OF FRANZ JÄGERSTÄTTER, *by Gordon Zahn, Templegate, $10.95, 288 pp.*

This is the revised edition of Gordon Zahn's study of the life and death of Franz Jägerstätter, the Austrian Catholic peasant who resisted participation in Hitler's wars and was beheaded by the Nazis in 1943. Zahn's sociological method and background provide the necessary discipline for avoiding the pitfalls associated with accounts of the saintly or the heroic. Zahn utilizes interviews with Jägerstätter's family, peers, and

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neighbors, as well as Jägerstätter's own written testimony, unearthed by Zahn in the course of his investigation.

Jägerstätter's life involved no easy compromises. He had to abandon his family to providence, face unattended the fury of the totalitarian state, and withstand the temporizing, common-sense counsels of the authorities of his church. Jägerstätter's moral clarity and precision proved startling, a flash of light in the dead of night.

In Solitary Witness is *The Cost of Discipleship* written in the biographical genre. It, too, is a classic. It deserves to be read no less than once in a lifetime.

P.J.

CHIEF OF STAFF, *edited by Samuel Kernell and Samuel L. Popkin, University of California, $15.95, 244 pp.*

The problems that have befallen the Reagan White House, most notably Don Regan's difficulties, might well have been avoided if the lessons in this volume had been followed in the last few years. In January 1986, eight former White House chiefs of staff covering administrations from Eisenhower to Carter gathered in to discuss problems and strategies for managing the office of the presidency.

Veteran NBC newsman John Chancellor's opening question set a realistic tone: "Sometimes presidents want to do damn fool things . . . How do you talk the president out of a damn fool idea?"

"Well, very gingerly if your president is Lyndon Johnson," says Harry McPherson.

The answers to this and other questions varied of course, but some common and important themes were developed.

There is a vital need for an organizational system for solving problems and weighing options. The difficulties that reach the president are far too complex and his sources of information, bolstered dramatically by modern technology, are too massive to allow for intuitive problem solving.

Questioned about Watergate, Nixon staff director Bob Halderman noted that it was not the Nixon White House management system that led to Watergate, but rather that the system was not followed: there were no checks and balances.

All participants stressed that the White House staff should be small and lean. Large staffs lead to management problems and increased territorial battles. All agreed that the chief of staff should be a coordinator of policy options for the president, not a formulator of policy. And all emphasized the need for anonymity; staff members should not become focal points for partisan debate.

Since the NSC's role in conducting operations in Nicaragua had become public a short time before this symposium, the participants discussed whether the NSC should be involved in operations. The unanimous answer: No.

There are many other important elements in this book as well as little bits of fascinating history. There are also some key omissions. *Washington Post* columnist David Broder commented that there was little discussion of the political dimension, the uses of power both in a personal and institutional sense, and little analysis of how the chief of staff himself uses his staff to gather and evaluate information.

In addition to McPherson and Halderman, the other participants included General Andrew Goodpaster, (Eisenhower's chief of staff); Theodore Sorensen, (Kennedy's); Alexander Haig, (Nixon's and Ford's) Donald Rumsfeld and Richard Cheney, (Ford's) and Jack Watson (Carter's).

FRED ROTONDARO

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 370)

New York City has been in place since 1967. Obviously, correlation does not prove causation, but its "non-judgmental" approach to teen-age sex has clearly been unsuccessful in preventing, or even diminishing, pregnancies among unwed teenagers, abortions, fatherless households, and sexually transmitted diseases, all of which have increased. . . . As the black columnist William Raspberry has pointed out, Washington D.C., where sex-ed courses are mandatory, has one of the highest birth rates among unwed teenagers in the nation. By contrast, in earlier eras, when sex-ed courses were unknown, contraceptives less freely available, and out-of-wedlock pregnancy bore a social stigma, the unwed birth rate among blacks was lower than it is among whites today.

Why, then, do educated elites remain convinced that ignorance about sex is the cause of the problems, and that their solution lies with a curriculum that, from the passages cited in Smith's article, is both morally and intellectually vacuous? (Few experienced parents would be so fatuous as to suppose that adolescents, who are characteristically convinced that disasters befall other people, are likely to be dissuaded from engaging in sexual activity by warnings that it is "unwise" and "dangerous.")

One reason may be that Catholics like Smith not only fail to challenge the prevailing secular wisdom but uncritically accept its assumptions. She, too, thinks that schools must "recognize" the reality of teen-age (and pre-teen) sex, and denies that such recognition "necessarily" implies acceptance. The possibility that such tacit acceptance may be causally related to the need for schools to teach about "pre-natal care," disease, and contraception, seems to have eluded her, as does the evidence that social trends are not necessarily irreversible. Nor does she exhibit any skepticism about the currently fashionable notion that the "self-esteem" of students from broken and/or "reconstituted" homes may be threatened by presenting the traditional family as the model. By the same logic, one should refrain from teaching children of illiterates to read and condemning racial discrimination to the children of the prejudiced. Furthermore, having spent several years as a divorced custodial parent, I have little doubt that most single parents are keenly aware of the advantages of two-parent households and hope their children will some day enjoy them.

There's no evidence that parents, whatever their own behavior, want schools to be "non-censorious" about teen-age sex. It seems not to have occurred to Smith that the only "consen-

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sus'' threatened by religious leaders who are urging schools to teach that sex outside of marriage is wrong and to present the two-parent family as an achievable goal is that among the so-called curriculum ''experts'' and educators. Nor does she appear to realize that school systems across the nation have been less than candid with parents about the content of sex-ed courses because few want to provoke the outcry likely to ensue when parents learn, for example, that homosexuality is being presented as ''an alternative lifestyle.''

Yet, if homosexuality were to become the dominant ''sexual preference,'' the human race would become extinct or dependent for its reproduction on medical technology. Debate continues as to its cause or causes. . . .

Is it the fear of being stigmatized as ''homophobic'' that dissuades Catholics from pointing out that AIDS offers compelling evidence for the rationality of traditional moral standards?

Educated Catholics, particularly those who are political liberals, frequently seem virtually indistinguishable from the non-religious when it comes to sexual ethics.

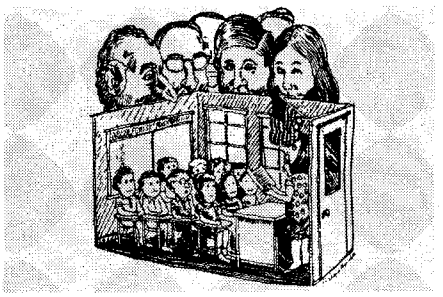
Meanwhile, Surgeon General Koop hopes to prevent AIDS by giving sex-ed courses to third-graders; one can understand his desperation, but it seems just as likely to give them nightmares. Proponents of ''safe sex'' on the campuses and elsewhere are pushing condoms. As a lawyer old enough to recall when they were known to be a less than totally effective method of contraception I suspect that it's only a matter of time before someone who develops AIDS despite the use of condoms files a lawsuit.

Unfortunately, the defendant will be a manufacturer. Those, including Catholics, who believe that one must be ''nonjudgmental'' about ideas and behavior, as well as people, will remain convinced that such intellectual mushiness connotes ''compassion.'' MARY MAINLAND

The author replies:

Logically speaking, Ms. Mainland's first point — that the New York City sex-ed curriculum has not prevented the worrisome list of sex-related problems — is nothing more than an unprovable assertion which could be argued in reverse: that, had the program not been in effect, problems might have been even greater. I see no reason to assert either position, for I do not believe any sex-ed program is a cure-all or a substitute for the home and church. Nor am I willing to throw out sex-ed courses (which neither the pope nor bishops suggested), take contraceptives off the market, or return to the social stigma — rightly called a double standard — applied to unmarried mothers of any age, as Ms. Mainland seems to favor. I doubt that such measures would prevent the problems about which Ms. Mainland and I share concern.

Ms. Mainland's excessive belief in the adolescent myth of themselves as impervious to disaster makes futile not only



appeals to reason (advanced in drivers'-ed courses or in the schools' description of teen sexual activity as ''unwise'' or ''dangerous'') but also appeals to morality. Where does that leave Ms. Mainland? I believe that reason must be appealed to, which is why I suggested that the push for sexual abstinence be made stronger and broader in the city's course.

If school sex-ed programs have *caused* an increase in sexual activity, pregnancy, or disease, as Ms. Mainland hints, conclusive evidence to support such a claim, evidence that isolates the program as the cause, was not referred to in her letter. To my knowledge, such evidence doesn't exist. As for ''recognition'' itself as a ''cause,'' recognition of any problem (drug abuse, teen suicide, etc.) is vital to resolving or preventing it. But neither recognition, nor the proposed cure, creates the problem it intends to solve. Do drug abuse courses encourage drug abuse? Drivers'-ed courses foster recklessness? Just what a *denial* of problematic realities like these would accomplish, Ms. Mainland has yet to spell out.

I took no position on the issue of whether a student's self-esteem is threatened by a school's stressing the traditional family as model. But Ms. Mainland's own analogies falter. Take the illegitimate child. While an illiterate parent or racist parent can learn to read or cast off prejudice, a parent's marriage after a child is born out of wedlock does not change the child's own self-image, if that has been determined in part by being illegitimate.

Most troublesome in the letter is Ms. Mainland's tone, illustrated by the phrases: ''Catholics like Smith uncritically accept,'' ''seems to have eluded her,'' ''nor does she exhibit any skepticism,'' ''not to have occurred to Smith,'' ''nor does she appear to realize.'' Only on the basis of such a tone can I point out what seems to have eluded Ms. Mainland: that a person who has looked at the problems, the curriculum, and the criticisms of it, can reasonably differ from what Ms. Mainland might espouse. I am embarrassed to have to point out that difference of opinion does not necessarily imply intellectual or moral blindness or ineptitude.

What is more, Ms. Mainland fails to mount any argument for her own causes, like the immorality of sex outside marriage (a point I certainly did not argue against, though I did say this was a value which society at large now enjoys no consensus on, though I wish it would, particularly as teens are concerned). And while I may be among the ''mushy, intellectual, Catholic, liberal elite'' — to string together Ms. Mainland's insinuations — I am pleased we both find the current state of sexual conduct and vulnerability among young people an issue worth grappling over.

KAREN SUE SMITH

Black athletes

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: Dr. Mark Naison's piece, ''A Failed Game Plan'' [*April 10*], struck me since it dealt with the issue of sports in minority communities. I wrote

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an article in the August, 1986 issue of *The Christian Science Monitor* which addressed similar issues.

I felt that Dr. Naison's article seriously diminished the necessity for blacks in particular, to *de-emphasize* the importance of athletics, and instead to insist emphatically upon academic achievement. This task will not be easy, but I feel a further encouragement of athletic prowess is precisely what we do *not* need at this critical juncture in the history of black Americans. As I wrote in my *Monitor* article:

> For most whites, there is an awareness, however dim, of the difference between a pop idol and a role model; for many blacks it is often a difference without a distinction.
>
> It is precisely because of these blurred distinctions that black educators should resist the tendency to reinforce them by insisting that athletic prowess continue to be the key to college admission, and by implication the ticket out of the ghetto. Most surveys on the subject suggest that a young black stands a better chance of becoming a brain surgeon than an NBA champion, yet the contrary myth persists; and it has very little to do with white racism....
>
> The point here...is to dramatize the urgency of blacks taking the responsibility for reasserting the primacy of certain basic values in our communities. If we are serious in saying that Len Bias's death should not be in vain, then, as Larry Hawkins, founder of the Institute for Athletics and Education, has observed, "we need programs that will teach athletes how to *spell* 'jump shot' rather than how to shoot it...," because a mind is indeed a terrible thing to waste.

PRESTON GREENE
DePaul University

Painting by number

Burke, Va.

To the Editors: Your editorial comments in the February 27 issue raised questions about some findings in *The American Catholic People* (Doubleday) written by George Gallup, Jr., and myself. Some of those comments deserve a response:

Noting that we pointed out that Catholics continue to hold liberal political positions you said, "If so, the bishops should anticipate no real opposition by the rank and file to their pastoral letter on the economy. Frankly, we think this is too good to be true."

But we did not suggest that the economics pastoral would meet little opposition. We noted on page 184: "On one hand, a majority of lay Catholics agree with positions taken by the bishops on issues such as arms control, Central America, abortion, education, and economic policy; on the other hand, there is a strong resistance to the church's being involved in the political arena. This contradiction suggests that the problem lies more with the style of the bishops' political involvement than the substance of the issues involved. First, the bishops have obviously not articulated a clear simple rationale for speaking out on public issues; second, they have not persuaded their people that they — the bishops — know what they are doing and are not acting, intentionally or otherwise, in a partisan manner."

Your editorial cites isolated reports on Catholic attitudes about their relationship to God and asks, "Just what does this mean?" In the book, these findings are reported along with others which show that the religious "intensity factor" among Catholics is lower than that among Protestants; they are not just numbers thrown out without a context.

You note that we claim to refute the myth that Catholic women are in a state of "revolt" by suggesting that young Catholic women are staying away from parish life because of limited roles available to them. We do not claim that this is not true for some women; it obviously is. We made the point that we did not measure the degree of anger among those who were angry. In general, we did not minimize the challenge the church faces in its treatment of women. We wrote: "Catholic women want much more from their church; but they have not given up their belief it is still *their* church."

Your editorial cited only part of the figures we used to suggest a growing confusion among Catholic women about the roles families should play in their lives. The editorial cited the figure that in 1985, 66 percent of Catholic women described being married with children — with or without a job — as the ideal lifestyle. What made this figure particularly interesting was the figure you didn't cite — this represented a decline from 82 percent in 1982. In any event, we were very clear to point out that this was just one of several very tentative indicators which "suggest the approach of a great deal of confusion, upheaval, and even rebellion involving Catholic family life."

JIM CASTELLI

Lincoln's marriage

Princeton, N.J.

To the Editors: David R. Carlin, Jr. writes in his column ["The Lincoln Myth," February 13] that "Lincoln is our great national model of both altruism and self-interest." He then goes on to argue that the two notions are essentially irreconcilable, and that we as Americans cherish our "success," our "individualism," at the cost of our "sanctity."

Certainly there is a great deal of truth

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to Carlin's latter observation: the "American dream" means to us success and security, and not radical selflessness. As well, I would agree that a marriage of altruism and self-interest is indeed problematic. Carlin, however, contends that the two ideals are almost completely contradictory, and, as a result of the suggestion, carries his argument too far.

In questioning whether it makes any sense to admire someone for being both ambitious and altruistic, Carlin seems to forget about his prime example, Abraham Lincoln. Carlin never denies that Lincoln in some way managed to unite the two. And he casually dismisses the heroic examples of the Old Testament through association with "the vulgar Calvinism of the Puritans." Cannot David and Solomon be models of virtue for Catholics too?

Carlin is right to assert that virtue must never play second to ambition. And yet somehow I think it is possible to want to fully realize one's gifts for the glory of God. Surely we do Him no service if we surrender the world to those who have no faith in Him.

TIMOTHY P. SCHILLING

Back to the sources

West River, Md.

To the Editors: I must confess to some puzzlement at the way J. Bryan Hehir ["Principles & Politics," March 27] deals with Avery Dulles's apprehension that the bishops, in recent pastoral letters, have tried to be too detailed and specific in addressing particular points of policy.

To quote Hehir, "if one uses the standard literature of the nuclear debate for the past thirty, years it could not be demonstrated that a variety of groups and institutions had made the moral assessment of strategic policy a central theme." ". . . The amount of writing devoted to the ethics of nuclear policy . . . from 1959 through 1980 when the bishops began their work is embarrassingly scant (I count two articles in *Theological Studies* from 1959-1980)." In other words, the bishops were starting from scratch!

I have not reviewed the major Catholic theological journals in this period, as Father Hehir has, but perhaps their editors were at fault. At any rate, Hehir could have looked a bit further.

The fact is that during this period the work of American, British, Dutch, and German Catholic scholars was quite abundant. Professor William O'Brien, of Georgetown University, right under the bishops' noses, produced two books dealing precisely with specific problems of nuclear policy from a just war perspective, covering the same ground with the same kind of moral analysis that Father Hehir demands. One could mention also the work in this period of Justus George Lawler, William Nagle, and John C. Ford, not to mention non-Catholic scholars such as Paul Ramsey and Ted Weber.

A book edited by Nagle, *Morality and Modern Warfare* (1960), carries an eighteen-page bibliography. English Catholics who have written extensively on the specific issues of nuclear strategy include Walter Stein, Roger Rushton, and E.B.F. Midgeley, whose com-

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prehensive *The Natural Law Tradition and the Theory of International Relations* (1975) included an extensive discussion of nuclear war and nuclear deterrence. The English Catholic weekly paper, *The Tablet*, devoted considerably more space to discussion of these issues than did *Theological Studies*. Father Hehir was apparently aware of this in 1984 when he wrote, "the intensity of public discussion of both nuclear strategy and the ethics of strategy in the 1980s should not obscure the fact that both subjects have a rich history in the nuclear age" (cf. R.C. Johansen, *The Nuclear Arms Debate: Ethical and Political Implications*, World Order Study Program, 1984).

Of course, such works did not carry the stamp of teaching authority as does the bishops' pastoral letter, "The Challenge of Peace," nor were they widely propagated, as was the pastoral letter, in a systematic educational campaign carried on through Catholic schools and colleges with the approval and support of many bishops. Yet is would be unfair and misleading not to acknowledge that these scholars were at work and laying the groundwork for the pastoral letter.

Father Dulles wishes to examine "the price of such specificity" in pastoral teaching and finds the price too high. Father Hehir agrees that "how one calculates the costs is the essence of the debate." Hehir believes, "a social ethic stated at this (sic) level of generality will fail to engage the issues it must address." Granted, but Hehir fails to mention another cost, i.e., that wherever the bishops' teachings specifically mix ethical principles and empirical analysis, their conclusions (and in "The Challenge of Peace" this applied to all but one of the specific conclusions) had to be qualified as prudential judgments. The greater the mix of strategic analysis and ethical analysis the stronger the qualification. This could not fail to carry some cost in credibility with certain segments of the interested public.

One example of this cost was the puzzlement which resulted from the bishops' condemnation of counter-city or counter-value nuclear war at the same time as they were objecting to weapons with a "hard target kill capability" that could be viewed as first-strike weapons. A number of experts asked, if the bishops object to the counter-city use of nuclear weapons and the counter-force use of nuclear weapons, what kind of weapons do they want to make up the U.S. nuclear deterrent? Question: should the bishops put forth views on how the nuclear deterrent should be structured? I think Father Dulles would say no, and I would agree.

Several years ago a group of Catholics in Connecticut demonstrated outside a General Electric factory, citing the pastoral letter, protesting the fact that the factory was producing warheads for "first-strike" weapons. GE executives might have asked, what kind of weapons do you want us to produce? Could the demonstrators have responded, citing the pastoral letter? Father Dulles has a point!

The most significant and far-reaching conclusion of that pastoral letter, however, did not derive from any sophisticated ethical analysis of complicated strategic concepts or weapon systems; it was the judgment rendered by Pope John Paul II that nuclear "deterrence based on balance, certainly not as an end in itself but as a step on the way toward a progressive disarmament, may still be judged morally acceptable" ("The Challenge of Peace" S.173). This judgment has emerged as the most controversial of any put forward in the pastoral letter.

Deterrence is the strategy of threatening retaliation with all or part of the whole range of strategic nuclear weapons in the U.S. arsenal. Perhaps unknown to the pope in the summer of 1982 when he delivered his judgment on deterrence, the American bishops were preparing either to forbid or to question any use of such weapons. Admittedly those proscriptions rested on judgments about the nature of the weapons and how they would be used. In the end, the bishops, having in effect said no to virtually any use of such weapons, pronounced the threat — in the name of deterrence — to use them morally acceptable. In this they are no different from the bishops of France, the UK and Germany; all NATO nations where governments are committed to the policy of nuclear deterrence and if need be, to the first use of nuclear weapons.

It used to be a tenet of Catholic theology that one may not even conditionally intend actions that are wrong in the doing. Some theologians are now questioning whether this is an "exceptionless norm." Here is an issue that it should be possible to debate and to resolve without the benefit of detailed, specialized knowledge of nuclear weapons or strategy.

EDWARD DOHERTY

What I resent

Crestwood, Ky.

To the Editors: As a person of Anglo-Catholic background once deceived enough in my ecumenical bliss to find *all* Catholicisms moving in the direction of a more genuine Christianity, I resent John Garvey's equivocating appraisal of Jimmy Swaggart ["Truth Flashes," December 26]. Many of us perceive no "truth flashes" in a system that (as Mr.

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Garvey reports approvingly) "damns" country-rock singer Jerry Lee Lewis for "booze, drugs, and bad marriages" while placing his "pig-ignorant" cousin Swaggart and similar ilk among the "saved." Bibliolatry, savage chauvinism, and turning people into conformist, "moral" sheep appear, on the face of it, a thousand times more indecent — and more dangerous to planetary civilization — than the venial deviations that outrage fundamentalists and so scandalize Garvey.

Garvey appears to admire the hellfire-and-damnation breeding that made Jerry Lee Lewis and the fictional O'Connor character smug in their assurance of "sin" and in a destructive, vindictive moral dualism. Had spiritual fresh air from our deist founding fathers reached these two, or any suspicion that they *share* in the creation of values, and are not just androids with judgments predetermined by a primitive script, perhaps their life-outcomes would seem less sinister, *whatever* their choices. At least then they *might* have grown more godlike, less prone to snuffle before religious tyrants a lot more "Satanic" than any individuals given to drink, drugs, or lawlessness.

One must also take exception, in one respect, to the comments of Stephen Elred ["Gay-Rights/Gay Plight"]. As a homosexual Elred once received a certain "grace," it would appear. For whatever reason, or by whichever path, he found himself delivered, at the price, no doubt, of pariahhood and suffering, from the spiritual Corregidors of the complacent and the conquered. Totally condemned by a canting tradition that has annihilated literally millions of "heretics," "witches," "Sodomites," Jews, "new World" pagans, and other undesirables, Elred had been awarded the splendorous, indeed *divine*, opportunity to fend for himself, spiritually — vindicating and redeeming centuries of the damned.

Instead, in your pages, he *truckled* to spiritual authority, half-apologized for his kind, and sought redress. Homosexual saints and martyrs doubtless died in vain unless their contemporary heirs refuse to become pale imitations of bourgeois heterosexuals simply because the uncomprehending church claims there is no other way. Better far to alert the moral police to the homoeroticism classically implicit in their own institutions and religious orders (See Hugh Ross Williamson's useful *The Arrow and the Sword*).

Sometimes *Commonweal* has alerted us, via a rather frank Catholic philosopher, to the proposition that trying to salvage Catholic dogma today is like polishing brass on the Titanic. Other times (*vide* Garvey and Elred) it shows us that bowing and scraping, or singing wistful old hymns — perhaps "Nearer My God, To Thee" — remain, rather, the order of the day on that fateful vessel.

NORRIS MERCHANT

Our revolution

Lakewood, N.J.

To the Editors: The critique of the Sandinista government in your editorial ["Uncivil Targets," April 10] is biased, showing no insight into the political and social history of Nicaragua, including our dominance of that country since the Marines landed in 1912 and the concurring dominance of the elite families in national affairs.

You say combined pressure should be put on the Sandinistas to make them change. We are the ones who need to change! We need a change of heart and of viewpoint. The "sins" listed in your editorial look different from the perspective of the peasants who now have representatives in the General Assembly. Formerly, they had always been without power. It was this very change in the power structure that sparked the present difficulties of the Sandinistas. It was also a big step towards democracy. When this change occurred, some members of the elite withdrew from the government. At the same time and for the same reason, *La Prensa* changed its editorial policy from pro- to anti-Sandinista. Some elites do not want to lose power, and some in our government do not want to lose control. A combination of both is a mighty foe. It is interesting that when the peasants refer to the overthrow of Somoza, they call the struggle "our revolution," which they perceive as an ongoing process.

FLORENCE WAGNER

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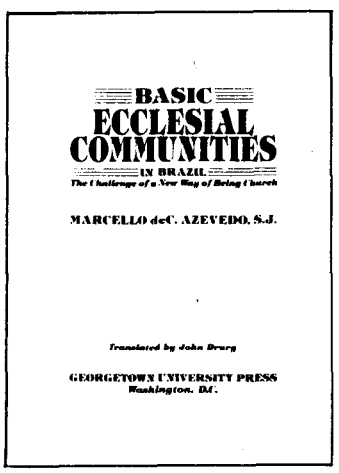

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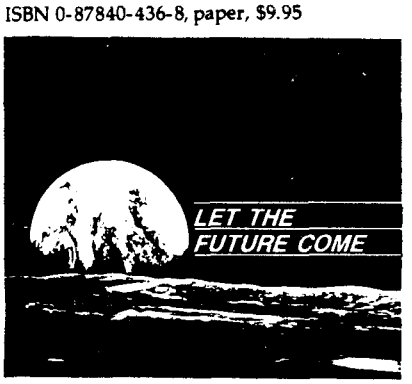

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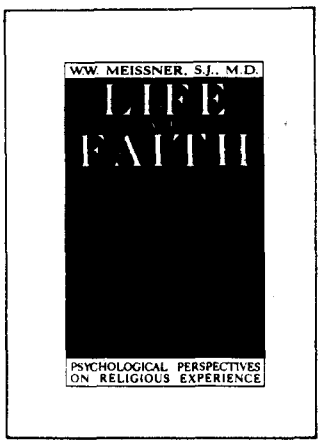

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